

The Devil's Children: *Volk, Devils and Moral Panics in White South Africa, 1976 - 1993*

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ABSTRACT

There are moments in history where the threat of Satanism and the Devil have been prompted by, and in turn stimulated, social anxiety. This thesis considers particular moments of ‘satanic panic’ in South Africa as moral panics during which social boundaries were challenged, patrolled and renegotiated through public debate in the media. While the decade of the 1980s was marked by successive states of emergency and the deterioration of apartheid, it began and ended with widespread alarm that Satan was making a bid for the control of white South Africa. Half-truths, rumour and fantasy mobilised by interest groups fuelled public uproar over the satanic menace – a threat deemed the enemy of white South Africa. Under P. W. Botha’s ‘total onslaught’ rhetoric, a large sector of white South Africa feared total ‘moral onslaught’. Cultural guardians warned against the satanic influences of popular culture, the corrupting power of materialism, and the weakening moral resolve of the youth. Others were adamant that Satanists sought to punish all good, white South Africans with financial ruin and divorce in their campaign to destroy white South Africa. From the bizarre to the macabre, the message became one of societal decay and a youth that was simultaneously out of control. While influenced by the international Satanism Scare that swept across the global West during the 1980s and early 1990s, this thesis argues that South Africa’s satanic panics reflected localised anxieties as the country’s social borders changed over time. While critically discussing the concept of the ‘moral panic’ and its analytical value in historical study, this thesis further argues that these moments of moral panic betray the contextually specific anxieties surrounding the loss of power and shifts in class and cultural solidarity. In so doing, this thesis seeks to elucidate the cultural changes in South Africa between 1976 and 1993 by highlighting the social, temporal and geographic boundaries which were contested and renegotiated through the shifting discourse on Satanism.

OPSOMMING

Daar is oomblikke in die geskiedenis toe die bedreiging van Satanisme en die Duiwel deur sosiale angstigtheid aangespoor is en dit ook verder gestimuleer het. Hierdie tesis neem bepaalde momente van ‘sataniese paniek’ in Suid-Afrika – waartydens sosiale grense deur publieke debat in die media uitgedaag, gepatrolleer en heronderhandel is – in oënskou as oomblikke van morele paniek. Terwyl die 1980s gekenmerk is deur agtereenvolgende noodtoestande en die agteruitgang van apartheid, het dit begin en geëindig met wydverspreide verontrusting dat Satan poog om beheer oor wit Suid-Afrika te verkry. Halwe waarhede, gerugte en fantasie, gemobiliseer deur belangegroepe, het publieke onsteltenis oor die sataniese gevaar aangehits – ’n vyandige bedreiging vir wit Suid-Afrika. In samehang met PW Botha se ‘totale aanslag’ retoriek, het ’n groot deel van wit Suid-Afrika ook ’n ‘totale morele aanslag’ gevrees. Die kultuurbewakers het gewaarsku teen sataniese invloede op populêre kultuur, die sedebederwende mag van materialisme en die verflouing van morele vasberadenheid onder die jeug. Ander was oortuig daarvan dat Sataniste daarop uit is om alle goeie, wit Suid-Afrikaners deur finansiële ondergang en egskeiding te straf in hulle veldtog om wit Suid-Afrika te vernietig. Van die grillige tot die makaber, die boodskap was een van sosiale agteruitgang en ’n jeug wat terselfdertyd buite beheer was. Alhoewel Suid-Afrika beïnvloed is deur die heersende internasionale sataniese verskrikking wat gedurende die 1980s en die vroeë 1990s, dwarsdeur die globale Weste gevind is, voer hierdie tesis aan dat die Suid-Afrikaanse sataniese paniek, soos die sosiale grense in Suid-Afrika verskuif het, gelokaliseerde ans gereflekteer het. Buiten die kritiese bespreking van die konsep van die ‘morele paniek’ en die analitiese waarde daarvan, argumenteer hierdie tesis verder dat hierdie momente van morele paniek konteks-spesifieke ans blootlê, paniese ans wat met die verlies van mag en veranderings in klas- en kulturele samehörigheid saamhang. Hierdeur beoog die tesis om kulturele veranderinge in Suid-Afrika tussen 1976 en 1993 toe te lig, deur te fokus op die sosiale, temporale en geografiese grense wat deur die verskuiwende diskoers oor Satanisme betwis en heronderhandel is.

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Chapter One:

Introduction and Literature Review

Adam and Evil

Bloodless and bloated it drifted between London skies and muddy water. Washed up by the cold tide of the Thames, it bobbed beneath Tower Bridge where a passerby finally recognized it as human. The body of a small child, headless and limbless, was pulled from the river near the Globe Theatre on 21 September 2001. Dressed in a pair of bright orange shorts, the body had been in the river for up to ten days and was immediately connected to the otherworldly rituals of deviant occultists and African witches, initiating one of the most bizarre investigations in recent police history.¹ After dismissing links to similar finds in Europe, police became increasingly fixated on the idea that the boy – christened ‘Adam’ by the London Metropolitan police – was the first recorded victim of an African black magic ritual in the United Kingdom. Although police detectives stressed that they were following other possible links, the notion that the Afro-Caribbean Adam was a sacrificial victim became the lead in story in press and police investigations. He died from a violent trauma to the neck, but there was little further evidence: Adam’s body revealed simply that he was aged between four and seven and that his shorts were bought from a Woolworths store in Germany.² With the rest of his body missing and his identity unknown, the speculation surrounding the case of Adam grew darker.

Within a month of its discovery this ‘Thames torso case’ was explicitly linked to African witchcraft, and more specifically to South African ‘muti’ killings.³ The British public was quickly ‘educated’: ‘muti’ is the Zulu word for medicine, it is practiced by witchdoctors and ‘sangomas’ throughout South Africa and these African healers habitually use human body parts in concocting potions for their ‘clients’. The police, by all reports, were equally eager for education on the subject and a national conference was soon organized, attended by

¹ S. Tendler, ‘Murdered boy’s torso found in Thames’, *The Times*, 24 September 2001, 14; ‘Witchdoctor investigation in Torso Case’, 16 October 2011, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/England/1602477.stm, available: 12 April 2011 and S. Tendler, ‘Macabre find raises ritual murder fear’, *The Times*, 26 January 2002, 3 and G. Tramlett, ‘Tracing Adam’, *The Guardian*, 7 August 2003.

² S. Tendler, ‘Dutch murder link to child found in Thames’, *The Times*, 25 September 2001, 13 and R. Kennedy, ‘Mandela plea for help to identify torso of boy’, *The Times*, 20 April 2002, 6.

³ S. Bird, ‘Witchdoctor theory on boy’s torso’, *The Times*, 17 October 2001, 13.

detectives, criminologists and officials from the Home Office.⁴ Police also took heed of grisly stories of sacrifices rife throughout London and rumours that similar murders would soon occur. As commander Andy Baker of Scotland Yard commented, ‘there is some suggestion of ceremonies taking place and strong rumours that body parts are used. They could be brought in or taken from murdered bodies. Our fear is [that it is] the first of many.’⁵ Alarm over African rituals increased further when candles wrapped in sheets and inscribed with the West African name Adekoyejo Fola Adeoye were discovered in the Thames. Soon the British press began blithely ignoring geography, and reported that this West African link was tied to South African ‘sangomas’ who regularly preyed on children.⁶ British police believed they were, as Detective Inspector Will O’Reilly noted, ‘treading new ground’ and to this end South African ‘experts’ stepped forward to guide them through this unfamiliar territory. While a South African pathologist was brought in for a second post-mortem, British detectives journeyed to Nigeria and South Africa in search of leads.⁷ They were particularly hopeful that South African doctors, academics, spiritualists and police officers would share their knowledge of the ‘African occult’, and soon relayed to the British press that they had ‘learnt things here that they don’t teach you at police college in London.’⁸

The investigation soon turned to well-known Africans, albeit only those known in Europe, to make personal pleas for information to the ‘African community’. This included a personal appeal by Nelson Mandela. After all, as one British detective noted, ‘Mr Mandela is a highly valued, respected and revered man by people across the world, and particularly by Africans.’⁹ Other appeals by African celebrities included that of Nigerian football player Nwankwo Kanu, who played for English football club Arsenal at the time.¹⁰ Scotland Yard also received expertise from Kobus Jonker, the retired head of the soon to be disbanded Occult Related Crimes Unit of the South African police – or, as it was labeled in some British reports, South Africa’s Occult Murder Squad. Also lending his expertise was Credo Mutwa, praised by the

⁴ S. Tendler, ‘Macabre find raises ritual murder fear’, *The Times*, 26 January 2002, 3 and ‘Thames torso “was human sacrifice”’, 29 January 2002, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk-news/england/1788452.stm>, available: 12 April 2011.

⁵ S. Tendler, ‘Macabre find raises ritual murder fear’, *The Times*, 26 January 2002, 3.

⁶ ‘Voodoo “practiced in UK”’, 8 March 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1861393.stm, available: 12 April 2011 and S. Tendler, ‘Macabre find raises ritual murder fear’, *The Times*, 26 January 2002, 3.

⁷ J. Snell, ‘Child protection: Appeal for help in Thames torso case’, *Community Care*, 21 February 2002, 12.

⁸ ‘Witchdoctor investigation in torso case’, 16 October 2001, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/1602477.stm, available: 12 April 2011 and R. Kennedy, ‘Mandela plea for help to identify torso of boy’, *The Times*, 20 April 2002, 6.

⁹ S. Tendler, ‘Thames torso case appeal by Mandela’, *The Times*, 13 April 2002, 6 and ‘Thames torso police to meet Mandela’, 12 April 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/1925193.stm, 12 April 2011.

¹⁰ G. Tremlett, ‘Tracing Adam’, *The Guardian*, 7 August 2003.

British press as ‘a Johannesburg-based sangoma’ and ‘expert in ritual killings’.¹¹ These South African experts confirmed the theory that Adam had been the victim of a ‘muti’ murder. Indeed, Mutwa even contended that the young boy had probably been stalked by his killers before they sacrificed him in an ‘obeah’ ritual to a West African sea goddess. By this point, however, the suspicious candles had been ruled out as evidence with the help of the New York police department who had been contacted by Adekoyejo Fola Adeoye. Accentuating the diaspora of Africans and African culture in the twenty-first century: the candles and sheets found in London had been part of a West African prayer service which sought to protect the New York based Adeoye following the 9/11 terrorist attacks.¹² Despite the irrelevance of this particular West African ritual to the case, police attention shifted away from South African ‘muti’ and towards Nigerian ‘voodoo’.¹³

In the meantime, raging press speculation stirred rumours and anxiety about just how widespread and commonplace these ‘ritual murders’ were in the United Kingdom. Having emerged as an expert on ‘ritual abuse’ during the Satanic Ritual Abuse Scares that had swept across the global West a decade earlier, well known British psychologist Valerie Sinason told the press that Adam’s body ‘bore all the hallmarks of a ritual murder.’ Indeed, the case was surely the beginning of a much larger trend, as Sinason continued, ‘I do not think this is a one-off.’¹⁴ Such sentiments were echoed by South African ‘cult cop’ Kobus Jonker, whose reputation as an ‘occult authority’ emerged during the transnational Satanism Scare. Known as ‘God’s Detective’ and the ‘Hound of God’ in the South African press, Jonker warned British journalists that ‘if there’s a guy operating in London, he’s going to need body parts again.’¹⁵ Consequently, fears that African ritual killers had brought their business to Europe became widespread. Soon three murders in Germany, Belgium and France were found to be similar to that of Adam: in France, a white man with missing feet and organs; in Antwerp, a Romany boy with missing genitalia; and in Frankfurt a white boy’s mutilated body had strips

¹¹ M. Dynes, ‘Torso boy was “sacrificed to sea goddess”’, *The Times*, 19 April 2002, 7.

¹² ‘Candle clues ruled out in “muti” killing’, 14 February 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/1821411, available: 11 April 2011.

¹³ By June 2002 the focus had shifted almost entirely to Nigeria. See M. Bright and P. Harris, ‘Thames Torso boy was sacrificed’, *The Observer*, 2 June 2002.

¹⁴ Quoted in ‘Voodoo “practiced in UK”’, 8 March 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1861393.stm, available: 12 April 2011. Also see S. Boggan, ‘Where were their eyes when this boy bled, his eyes as he screamed?’, *The Times*, 17 August 2004, 4.

¹⁵ “‘I was forced to kill my baby’”, 2 April 1992, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1899609.stm, available: 12 April 2011.

of flesh missing.¹⁶ Meanwhile the *Today* programme on BBC's Radio 4 had conducted their own investigation, and revealed to the public that 'voodoo rituals' involving children and animal sacrifice were being performed across the United Kingdom. John Azah, the vice chairman of the Metropolitan Police Independent Advisory Group, bemoaned the fact that 'in promoting cultural diversity we import the good and the bad...If this is a ritual killing then unfortunately – as bad as it may sound – we have imported those aspects of culture into mainland Britain.'¹⁷

Explaining the continued pertinence of the case after a year of little progress, detective O'Reilly contended that the 'ritual killing of children is an absolute reality' and '[w]e do not want this to gain a foothold in this country.'¹⁸ Outsourced at times to medical specialists in New York, forensic investigations offered some clues.¹⁹ Early analyses of Adam's stomach contents revealed that he was well nourished and cared for,²⁰ whilst pioneering scientific methods pinpointed the boy's origin to Nigeria.²¹ A new method of studying radioactive isotopes further discovered that Adam's stomach contents contained a 'bizarre concoction' including a clay pellet, gold, quartz, crushed bone and vegetation – 'almost certainly a black magic potion.'²² Other scientific methods were also used, including a breakdown of the chemical composition of Adam's bones in order to pinpoint his homeland. Finding traces of pre-Cambrian rock, detectives traversed five African countries and over six thousand miles in collecting samples for further analysis.²³ Additional studies of Adam's lungs and intestines found that they harboured pollen spores, and indicated that the boy had been in London for less than seventy-two hours before he had died. Such findings, the media suggested, only fuelled 'the theory that the boy was brought into the country specifically to be sacrificed.'²⁴

¹⁶ See, for example, B. Thompson, 'Murders linked to Torso in Thames', *The Times*, 28 May 2002, 7; 'Candle clues ruled out in "muti" killing', 14 February 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_nes/england/1821411, available: 11 April 2011 and 'Europe's police look at ritualistic killings', *Community Care*, 1426, 13 June 2002.

¹⁷ 'Voodoo "practiced in UK"', 8 March 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/1861393.stm, available: 12 April 2011.

¹⁸ T. Thompson, 'Thames torso detectives fear repeat killings', *The Observer*, 1 September 2002.

¹⁹ S. Tendler, 'Police hold 21 in hunt for killer of Thames torso boy', *The Times*, 30 July 2003, 7.

²⁰ T. Thompson, 'Thames torso detectives fear repeat killings', *The Observer*, 1 September 2002.

²¹ S. Tendler, 'Science pinpoints torso murder boy's homeland', *The Times*, 1 February 2003, 6. Also see P. Hunter, 'Adam: A 21st-Century Murder Mystery', *The Scientist*, 30 June 2003, 30 and M. Murphy, 'Isotopic techniques to provide fresh evidence', *Chemistry and Industry*, 4 October 2004, 14.

²² T. Keane, 'Pioneering tests show torso boy was black magic victim', *The Sunday Times* (London), 20 October 2002, 12.

²³ S. Tendler, 'Science pinpoints torso murder boy's homeland', *The Times*, 1 February 2003, 6.

²⁴ T. Keane, 'Pioneering tests show torso boy was black magic victim', *The Sunday Times* (London), 20 October 2002, 12.

Maintaining the West African link, police followed the reports of social workers who claimed to have spotted ‘strange voodoo-like’ items in the home of Joyce Asaguede, an asylum seeking West African living in Glasgow, Scotland.²⁵ By this point – linked to deviant occult rituals, Africa, and immigration – the case of Adam had taken a human trafficking angle, and was also mentioned in other cases of organ trafficking and mass murder that made headlines at the time.²⁶ In 2003, a year after Asaguede’s arrest, release and subsequent deportation, police raided nine addresses in London. One of which resulted in the arrest of a group of West Africans on charges of smuggling illegal immigrants into Britain and perhaps, newspapers speculated, more sinister deeds given the discovery of an animal skull in the group’s East London house.²⁷ The raids purportedly stemmed from a report from the United Nations Children’s Fund, ‘Stop the Traffick!’, which added ritual murder to the list of possible fates facing the thousands of children illegally smuggled across borders.²⁸ That same month a Nigerian named Sam Onogigovie was arrested in Dublin on charges of human trafficking and quickly identified as a suspect in the Case of Adam. After all, near the time of the murder Onogigovie had been residing in Germany, where Adam’s shorts had been purchased.²⁹

The arrests soon prompted a response from Nigerian community leaders in the United Kingdom who urged the public to understand that such actions were those of a few and not all Nigerians, and that instances of ritual murder were hardly commonplace.³⁰ These arrests also saw the re-questioning of Joyce Osagiede, the since deported Nigerian asylum seeker, who now claimed that she and her husband had been establishing demon worshipping cults in Germany and London. Osagiede told police that she had had been in the process of escaping her husband, who had killed eleven children including one of her daughters in cult rituals.³¹ According to newspapers, this West African cult was actually a sect of an Asian religious

²⁵ S. Tendler, ‘Woman is held in Torso case’, *The Times*, 10 July 2002, 5 and T. Thompson, ‘Thames torso detectives fear repeat killings’, *The Observer*, 1 September 2002.

²⁶ D. Adams, ‘Organ trafficking suspected in mass murder case’, *The Times*, 27 May 2003, 13.

²⁷ S. Tendler, ‘Police hold 21 in hunt for killer of Thames torso boy’, *The Times*, 30 July 2003, 7 and W. Hodge, ‘World Briefing Europe: Britain: 21 Nigerians Held in Murder Inquiry’, *The New York Times*, 30 July 2003, 4.

²⁸ R. Milne, ‘Child trafficking suspects held after police swoop’, *The Financial Times*, 30 July 2003, 5.

²⁹ S. Miller, ‘Nigerian man could provide DNA link to torso murderer’, *The Sunday Times* (London), 6 July 2003, 2; S. Tendler, ‘Thames torso boy murder suspect held in Dublin’, *The Times*, 3 July 2003, 5 and ‘Dublin files help torso murder probe’, *The Sunday Times* (London), 3 August 2003, 1.

³⁰ S. Miller, ‘Nigerian man could provide DNA link to torso murderer’, *The Sunday Times* (London), 6 July 2003, 2 and S. Tendler, ‘Thames torso boy murder suspect held in Dublin’, *The Times*, 3 July 2003, 5.

³¹ A. Nathan, ‘Torso in Thames link to 11 murders’, *The Sunday Times* (London), 3 August 2003, 1.

group, but Osagiede was admittedly vague on any facts relating to Adam and his death.³² The latest addition to Adam's bizarre story came with reports that the boy had been fed a 'black-magic bean' before his death. The calabar bean, 'used in Nigeria in witchcraft rituals', would have paralysed the small boy and allowed his murderers to dismember him alive and with ease.³³ However, it is unclear whether the police took Osagiede's claims seriously, and investigations continued to focus on the human smuggling element, with several more arrests and extraditions over the years.³⁴

An increasingly cold case, Adam continued to bear mention in media stories, particularly those related to African immigrants, missing children, domestic slave rings, and human trafficking. In 2005, for example, British child welfare experts claimed that the number of African children who had gone missing from schools was in the thousands, adding that at least three hundred children matching Adam's race and age group had gone missing in 2001 alone.³⁵ These concerns remained undergirded with occult references, including stories of innocent children being exorcised by evangelical African cults. Here specifically, the murder of eight year old Violet Climbie and torture of 'Child B' were linked to that of Adam and revealed as cases of 'ritual abuse'.³⁶ Police were reported to have rescued some nineteen children from abusive evangelicals by December 2005, whilst other estimates of children suffering 'ritual abuse' at the hands of Christian sects ranged from thirty-eight documented cases since 2000,³⁷ to fifty cases in London alone.³⁸ Reports claimed that these children were being beaten, starved, cut, burned, neglected and sold by African and South Asian adults who were convinced that these children were possessed by demonic forces.³⁹ As another possible example on this list, and surely a victim of 'ritual abuse', Adam's murder moved from South

³² D. James-Smith, 'In the trail of the voodoo child', *The Sunday Times* (London), 3 August 2003, 19.

³³ S. Tendler, 'Torso boy given black-magic bean before slaughter', *The Times*, 17 October 2003, 5.

³⁴ S. Marsh, 'Trafficker linked to ritual murder', *The Times*, 7 July 2004, 9 and 'Jailed child trafficker to help in torso case', *The Times*, 27 July 2004, 5. Also see D. Lister, 'Daughter of minister beheaded in "ritual killing"', *The Times*, 13 August 2004, 5; K. Dowling and D. Leppard, 'African girls lured to vice by voodoo', *The Sunday Times* (London), 21 June 2009, 12 and B. Freer, 'The children who don't make a sound', *The Sunday Times* (London), 17 April 2011, 26.

³⁵ A. Frean, 'The riddle of 300 young boys missing from London schools', *The Times*, 14 May 2005, 19 and A. Cowell, '300 Missing Boys in Britain Fuel Child-Trafficking Fear', *The New York Times*, 15 May 2005, 10.

³⁶ N. Woolcock, 'Exorcist trio face jail for torturing "witch"', *The Times*, 4 June 2005, 3 and S. Tendler and N. Woolcock, 'Police fear for children abused by religious sects', *The Times*, 12 December 2005, 25.

³⁷ A. Frean, 'Faiths that abuse children by ritual "should face law"', *The Times*, 30 June 2006, 32.

³⁸ J. Grimston, "'Witch child" abuse spreads in Britain', *Sunday Times* (London), 25 June 2006, 5.

³⁹ A. Frean, 'Faiths that abuse children by ritual "should face law"', *The Times*, 30 June 2006, 32 and J. Clayton, 'Revivalist churches bring fears of abuse to London: Witchcraft in the Congo', *The Times*, 21 November 2006, 31.

African ‘muti’ murder, to Nigerian ‘voodoo’, to fears surrounding the practices of African revivalist churches in Britain.

Media, Meaning and the Occult

An ongoing investigation that spanned several years, continents, and cultures, the case of Adam has never been solved. The boy’s remains, a small hunk of meat and bone measuring just forty-six by twenty centimeters, were finally laid to rest in December 2006. Buried with the name British police had given him, Adam’s funeral was attended by the officers who had appointed themselves his surrogate family in 2001.⁴⁰ An investigation that sought answers and, above all, the boy’s identity, the case of Adam gathered layers of meaning that crossed geographic, social and temporal boundaries. Sensationalized, protracted, and expensive, it was a case nuanced by the novelty of the ‘African occult’ and inflected by undercurrents of anxiety surrounding the globalization and immigration of Africans and their ‘deviant’ beliefs. As one British detective asserted, ‘while the majority of African people are appalled by muti and ritual murder, the migration of cultural beliefs means that such murders are likely to happen again.’⁴¹ Essentially, ‘Adam’ gained a complex identity within the social fabric of contemporary Britain: evolving from a nameless and unidentified murder victim to become symbolic of broader issues, the centerpiece in debates ranging from public policy to multiculturalism in the twenty-first century.

The case of Adam illustrates a fundamental concern of this thesis: the intersection of social anxiety and the consumption of myth in the creation of a social threat. Indeed, the case of Adam gave impetus to the policing, both actual and discursive, of cultural boundaries and underpinned African cultures with a necessary deviancy. In critiquing this, veteran Africanist scholar Terence Ranger identified the problem of the ‘aggregated African occult’ in both academic and popular thinking.⁴² Certainly the highly publicized case coincided with a

⁴⁰ ‘Torso murder reward offered’, 21 December 2001, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk/news/england/1723795.stm>, available: 12 April 2011 and ‘Ritual killing link to dead boy’, 25 January 2002, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/england/1780990.stm, available: 12 April 2011.

⁴¹ S. Boggan, ‘Where were their eyes as this boy bled, their ears as he screamed?’, *The Times*, 17 August 2004, 4.

⁴² T. Ranger, ‘Scotland Yard in the Bush: Medicine Murders, Child Witches and the Construction of the Occult: A Literature Review’, *Africa*, 77, 2 (2007), 272 – 283. Examples of Ranger’s work include T. O. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerrilla War in Zimbabwe: A Comparative Study* (Oxford: James Currey, 1985); T. O. Ranger, *Are We Not Also Men? The Samkange Family and African Politics in Zimbabwe* (Oxford: James

resurgent fascination with the 'African occult' within and beyond the academic realm. A burgeoning field of interest in Africanist scholarship, the 'occult' has served as an analytical lens into changing patterns of belief, morality and consumption in modernizing and globalizing African societies.⁴³ In an approach typified by the Comaroffs, witchcraft and 'occult practices' in contemporary African societies are viewed as 'thoroughly modern manifestations of uncertainties, moral disquiet and unequal rewards and aspirations in the contemporary moment.'⁴⁴ For Ranger, however, this growing body of work implicitly undergirds European assumptions about African cultures, and had done little to undercut the 'farrago of contemporary myths.'⁴⁵ The investigation of British police into the death of 'Adam' was emblematic of the conflation of myth and meaning in the 'aggregated African occult'. After all, British investigators readily exchanged one 'occult' ritual for another and maintained an 'absurd' fixation with South Africa in turning to an array of self-proclaimed 'experts' like Credo Mutwa.⁴⁶ Indeed, Mutwa is regularly decried as 'a fake, a fraud, and a charlatan' in South Africa, having also professed to being a Zulu shaman, prophet, healer, environmentalist and authority on extraterrestrials.⁴⁷

Of particular influence was the South African 'cult cop' Kobus Jonker and his Occult Related Crimes Unit, which was hailed by the British press as the world's only specialized police task

Currey, 1995) and T. O. Ranger, *Voices from the Rocks: Nature, Culture and History in the Metopos Hills of Zimbabwe* (Oxford: James Currey, 1999).

⁴³ See, for example I. Niehaus, *Witchcraft, Power and Politics: Exploring the Occult in the South African Lowveld* (Cape Town: David Philip Publishers, 2001); A. Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005); L. White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and History in Colonial Africa* (London: University of California Press, 2000); D. Ciekawy and P. Greschiere, 'Containing Witchcraft: Conflicting Scenarios in Postcolonial South Africa', *African Studies Review*, 41, 3 (1998), 1 – 14.; G. Clement Bond and D. M. Ciekawy, eds, *Witchcraft Dialogues: Anthropological and Philosophical Exchanges* (Ohio: Center for International Studies, 2001) and R. Pelgrim, *Witchcraft and Policing: South African Police Service attitudes towards witchcraft and witchcraft-related crime in the Northern Province* (Leiden: African Studies Centre, 2003).

⁴⁴ H. L. Moore and T. Sanders, *Magical Interpretations, Material Realities: Modernity, witchcraft and the occult in postcolonial Africa* (London: Routledge, 2001), 3. Also see T. Sanders, 'Reconsidering Witchcraft: Postcolonial Africa and Analytic (Un)Certainties', *American Anthropologist*, 105, 2 (2003), 338 – 352; J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff, 'Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction: Notes from the South African Postcolony', *American Ethnologist*, 26, 2 (1999), 279 – 303 and G. Ter Haar, *Imagining Evil: Witchcraft Beliefs and Accusations in Contemporary Africa* (Eritrea: Africa World Press, 2007).

⁴⁵ Quoted in Ranger, 'Scotland Yard in the Bush', 274.

⁴⁶ Ranger, 'Scotland Yard in the Bush', 274. For responses to Ranger's arguments see G. Ter Haar and S. Ellis, 'The Occult Does Not Exist: A Response to Terence Ranger', *Africa*, 29, 3 (2009), 399 – 412 and B. Meyer, 'Response to Ter Haar and Ellis', *Africa*, 79, 3 (2009), 413 – 415.

⁴⁷ D. Chidester, A. Tayob and W. Weisse, *Religion, politics and identity in changing South Africa* (Germany: Waxmann Verlag, 2004), 71. Mutwa himself is a good example of the transnationalisation of such beliefs, self-defining as an authority on local African (particularly Zulu) beliefs while also subscribing to David Icke's notion of the reptilian alien annexation of Earth.

force dedicated to the task of investigating ‘ritual murder’.⁴⁸ Crime related to witchcraft and the belief in the supernatural is a serious problem in South Africa, warranting a special commission just a year after the African National Congress won the country’s first democratic election.⁴⁹ The continued outbreaks of vigilante violence and witch purging, as well as the apparent rise in ‘muti’ medicine murders have garnered increasing academic and popular attention.⁵⁰ However, attempts to disaggregate the dimensions of the ‘occult’ in South Africa and trace the repercussions of this generalized term on the policing of ‘occult-related crime’ are relatively recent. In an ethnographic study of police attitudes towards witchcraft, Pelgrim has argued that the South African Witchcraft Suppression Act (1957), constructed during apartheid and on a European understanding of the ‘occult’, exists in tension with ‘an ancient system of dealing with social problems and anomalies.’⁵¹ Underscoring this problem of the ‘aggregated occult’, the South African Police Service’s definition of ‘occult-related crime’ includes ‘any human conduct that constitutes any legally recognized crime, the modus operandi of which relates to or emanates primarily from any belief or seeming belief in the occult, witchcraft, Satanism, mysticism, magic, esotericism and the like.’⁵² Under this broad purview of the ‘occult’, the specialized Occult Related Crimes Unit predominantly targeted the threat of Satanism in South Africa. Indeed, the conceptualization of the world’s only ‘ritual murder’ task force was fostered in the last embers of apartheid South Africa during a white, satanic panic.

Essentially, the language with which the case of Adam was articulated, and the ‘aggregated African occult’ translated, emerged in the Eurocentric, transnational Satanism Scares of the 1980s and early 1990s. The very term ‘ritual abuse’ is the finessed version of ‘satanic ritual abuse’, which was coined in the 1980s to classify a new type of crime believed to be perpetrated by deviant, European Satanists. A modern witch-hunt, hundreds of people across

⁴⁸ Ranger, ‘Scotland Yard in the Bush’, 273.

⁴⁹ The Ralushai Commission of Inquiry into Witchcraft Violence and Ritual Murder in the Northern Province (1995).

⁵⁰ See D. Kohnert, ‘Witchcraft and transnational social spaces: witchcraft violence, reconciliation and development in South Africa’s transition process’, *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 41, 2 (2003), 217 – 245; Niehaus, *Witchcraft, Power and Politics* (2001) and Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa* (2005).

⁵¹ Pelgrim, *Witchcraft and Policing*, 17 – 18. Also see S. Jensen, ‘Everyday Policing and the Occult: Notions of Witchcraft, Crime and “the People”’, *African Studies*, 63, 3 (2004), 193 – 211 and J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff, ‘Policing Culture, Cultural Policing: Law and Social Order in Postcolonial South Africa’, *Law & Social Inquiry*, 29, 3 (2004), 513 – 545.

⁵² T. S. Petrus, ‘An anthropological study of witch-craft related crime in the Eastern Cape and its implications for Law Enforcement policy and practice’ (PhD thesis, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, 2009), 139.

the United States, Europe and Australia were indicted on charges that they were members of a secret satanic cult that preyed on children. During its height, an instigation of ‘satanic ritual abuse’ could result in the removal of children from their parents and the physical inspection of children for signs of sexual abuse and torture.⁵³ Like the case of Adam, although with far greater intensity, the Satanism Scares depended on the amalgamation of social anxiety and rapid myth-making in the creation of a deviant social threat. However, as this thesis will show, at times a ‘satanic peril’ was produced and mobilized during particular moments of moral panic in white South Africa.

Taking Satan Seriously: Methodological Considerations

The Devil is not particularly popular in academia, particularly in South Africa. A small number of alarmist texts have been penned by South Africans in what is termed ‘anti-satanist’ literature: a voluminous but narrow corpus of work that warns against the dangers of Satanism and the ‘satanic influences’ of popular youth culture.⁵⁴ An even smaller body of works has been written from the academic perspective.⁵⁵ Although De Villiers has included Satanism in his work on Afrikaner spirituality, only Ivey has begun to undertake a closer study of Satanism with his psychological assessment of fifteen self-proclaimed Satanists. While all these works contend that Satanism in South Africa is largely a white social problem, Ivey has further argued that satanic involvement is predominantly found among white, working class youths as a consequence of declining white status in a democratic South Africa.⁵⁶ Perceived as racially and culturally limited to the ‘white’ and the ‘Western’, Satanism has attracted relatively little attention from studies of the ‘occult’ in Africa or South Africa. The Comaroffs only mention Satanism in connection to Setswana youths⁵⁷ and others

⁵³ Discussed in Chapter Four.

⁵⁴ See for example L. Els and K. Jonker, *Satanism in South Africa* (Lynwood Ridge: Amabhuku Publications, 2000); J. Gardiner and H. Gardiner, *How Safe is My Child? TV, Toys and the Occult in South Africa* (Cape Town: Struikhof, 1991); J. Gardiner and H. Gardiner, *The Seduction of South Africa's Youth* (Port Elizabeth: Lion Life, 1990); N. Goldman and K. Jonker, *Youth and Satanism Exposed* (Port Elizabeth: Lion Life, 1990) and J. Jonker, *Satanism Exposed* (Pretoria: Sigma Press, 1992).

⁵⁵ There are academic theses that have looked at the issue of Satanism, although most often from a Christian perspective. See: H. E. A. Staples, ‘Satanism and Associated Phenomena: A Study in the Philosophy of Education’, (PhD thesis, University of Potchefstroom, Potchesfroom, 1993); E. A. Nightingale, ‘The Preparedness of Social Workers to render intervention to client-systems involved in Satanism’ (MA thesis, University of Port Elizabeth, Port Elizabeth, 1996) and J. P. Du Toit, ‘Bad Faith – the Psychological Life of a Satanist who committed murder’ (MA thesis, Rhodes University, Grahamstown, 2001).

⁵⁶ G. Ivey, ‘The Psychology of Satanic Cult Involvement: An Archetypal Object Relations Perspective’ (PhD thesis, University of Natal, Pietermaritzburg, 1997), 337.

⁵⁷ Comaroff and Comaroff, ‘Occult Economies and the Violence of Abstraction’, 287 – 288.

in the growth of independent Christian churches among African communities,⁵⁸ while Niehaus focuses on African beliefs, including whites only through the lens of how images of white power or dominance manifest in African notions of witchcraft.⁵⁹ This thesis is not study of Satanism itself and has not sought to explore the objective dimensions of the ‘occult’. Rather it is an exploration of a particular aspect of Satanism: the ‘satanic peril’.

Moral Panic and Historians

Detached from the practices, beliefs or history of Satanism itself, the ‘satanic peril’ is located in the arena of perception and discourse and emerges during particular moments of social anxiety. This thesis does not provide an intellectual history or a theological analysis of Satanism in South Africa or abroad, nor does it seek to uncover the ethnographic realities of Satanists. Instead it concentrates on particular manifestations of ‘satanic panic’ in South Africa in which the creation of Satanism as a social threat signified the occurrence of a moral panic. Coined in 1972 by Stanley Cohen, the term ‘moral panic’ refers to a particular social phenomenon in which underlying social anxieties and blurring social boundaries are heightened and coalesced into the symbolic figure of the ‘folk devil’. Concerned with the identification, categorization and castigation of a ‘folk devil’, moral panics are volatile social reactions to a perceived threat. Ranging from the retrospectively ‘trivial’ to matters of real danger, moral panics blend fact and fiction and see the distortion and exaggeration of objective threats. Such meaning-making occurs through the media, and bears parallels to the streams of meaning which characterized the Case of Adam in the British public imagination. Indeed, the Case of Adam became symbolic of larger threats to society and acquired a shifting social definition. The satanic panics studied in this thesis are symptomatic of this process, and offer a useful case study to analyse the various layers of meaning crystalised in moral panic discourse. Aware that the interface between analysis and actuality is always blurred and permeable, this thesis critically explores the dynamics of moral panic theory and its application to particular historical phenomena.

Essentially concerned with the malleable and changing discursive definition of a social problem, moral panic scholarship is concomitantly broad – the phenomenon itself not limited

⁵⁸ See, for example, R. I. J. Hackett, ‘Discourses of Demonization in Africa and Beyond’, *Diogenes*, 50, 3 (2003), 61 – 75.

⁵⁹ Niehaus, *Witchcraft, Power and Politics*, 63 – 82.

to any particular geographic, temporal, or cultural context. In African studies the concept has been used, and the phenomenon studied, in topics ranging from social reactions to HIV/AIDS and the politicisation of sexual violence, to grassroots responses to changes in cultural and political hierarchies in Malawi and South Africa.⁶⁰ The concept of a moral panic has only recently begun gaining a foothold in South African academia. Niehaus, for example, has studied moral panics on the plains of the South African lowveld as an expression of discontent with black African masculinity.⁶¹ However, most scholars have employed the concept uncritically as self-evident in its meaning, which can have adverse effects on the interpretation and explication of an argument. Recourse to the label ‘moral panic’ without nuanced analysis of the term itself sometimes leads to it appearing as though the phenomenon itself is purely imagined and illusory. Posel’s argument about ‘baby rape’ as a moral panic in South Africa, for example, fails to draw an adequate distinction between actual occurrences of ‘baby rape’ and the disproportionate and exaggerated response to the perceived threat and meaning of the crime. Consequently Posel gives the impression that ‘baby rape’ is in itself an insignificant – or possibly non-existent – crime that is unworthy of social concern.⁶² This thesis addresses this potential pitfall in Chapter Two.

Nonetheless, the study of scares and perils, panics and devils is still relatively limited in South African historiography. Although, the meanings evoked by such social perils at various points in history form part of a broader academic interest in cultural rebellion and control: the policing of racial, moral and geographic boundaries.⁶³ A recurring social peril in white South African history and historiography is that of the ‘black peril’, discussed in the work of Van

⁶⁰ See, for example, P. Kaarsholm, ‘Moral Panic and Cultural Mobilization: Responses to Transition, Crime and HIV/AIDS in KwaZulu-Natal’, *Development and Change*, 36, 1 (2005), 133 – 156; G. Petros, C. O. Arhihenbuwa, C. Simbayi, S. Ramlagan and B. Brown, ‘HIV/AIDS and “Othering” in South Africa: The Blame Goes On’, *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 8, 1 (2006), 67 – 77; N. Dolby, ‘Popular Culture and the Public Space in Africa: The Possibility of Cultural Citizenship’, *African Studies Review*, 49, 3 (2006), 31 – 47; L. Vincent, ‘Moral Panic and the politics of populism’, *Representation*, 45, 2 (2009), 213 – 221; C. Gould, ‘Moral Panic, human trafficking and the 2010 Soccer World Cup’, *Agenda*, 24, 85 (2010), 31 – 44; H. Englund, *Prisoners of Freedom: Human Rights and the African Poor* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2006) and H. Englund, ‘Witchcraft and the Limits of Mass Mediation in Malawi’, *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 13, 2 (2007), 295 – 311.

⁶¹ I. Niehaus, ‘Maternal Incest and Moral Panic: Envisioning Futures without Fathers in the South African Lowveld’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 36, 4 (2010), 833 – 849.

⁶² D. Posel, ‘The Scandal of Manhood: “Baby Rape” and the Politicization of Sexual Violence in Post-Apartheid South Africa’, *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 7, 3 (2005), 239 – 252.

⁶³ See, for example: S. Swart, ‘The “Five Shilling Rebellion”: Rural White Male Anxiety and the 1914 Boer Rebellion’, *South African Historical Journal*, 56, 1 (2006), 88 – 102; K. Mooney, “‘Ducktails, Flick-Knives and Pugnacity’: Subcultural and Hegemonic Masculinities in South Africa, 1948-1960”, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24, 4 (1998), 753 – 774 and A. Grundlingh, “‘Rocking the Boat” in South Africa? Voelvry Music and Afrikaans and Anti-Apartheid Social Protest in the 1980s’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 37, 3 (2004), 483 – 514.

Onselen, Etherington and Cornwall.⁶⁴ These works also illustrate the implicit and explicit use of the ‘moral panic’ concept as a theoretical framework. Etherington’s approach is wary, Cornwall’s embracing, and Van Onselen’s absent altogether. Indeed, Van Onselen’s work on the ‘kitchen boy scare’ in the Witwatersrand between 1890 and 1914 makes no explicit use of the moral panic concept. But it relies implicitly on its frame-work, its terminology submerged in the language of ‘hysteria’ and ‘peril’ as waves of ‘collective sexual hysteria’ gripped the white population in the fear that black men were determined to rape white women. This thesis argues that historical analysis of such phenomena can only benefit from a concept that clarifies the dynamics, limitations, and homogeneity of its discourse and contours. However, this thesis also takes heed of an important point made by Van Onselen to ‘scrutinise the lull before and between the social storms.’⁶⁵ As such, this thesis makes a particular point of studying the ‘satanic peril’ through the lens of change over time in disaggregating the local from the global, the immediate from the historical. In discussing a hitherto unexplored aspect of Satanism as a social peril in white South Africa, this thesis interweaves a number of threads of social history. This has resulted in a largely recursive literature review, which means that the discussion returns to the definition of moral panic throughout the thesis in order to elucidate it fully.

Analysing Moral Panic through a Case Study

This thesis considers particular moments of alarm in mainly white communities in South Africa during which the prevention of the ‘satanic peril’ became tantamount to the moral and physical security of all white South Africans. In doing so, this thesis argues that a critical understanding of the moral panic concept is beneficial to social historians. In utilizing the ‘moral panic’ as an analytical tool, the arguments of this thesis are built upon the dislocation between the folk devil of the moral panic and the objective dimension of the threat: it is fundamentally concerned with the *portrayal* of Satanism and white rebellion at particular moments of social crisis, rather than the *actual* existence of Satanism or forms of cultural rebellion. This has direct consequences on the interpretation of ‘satanic panic’ in South Africa, and directs the focus to two periods of nationwide and volatile moral panic between

⁶⁴ See N. Etherington, ‘Natal’s Black Rape Scare of the 1870s’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 15, 1 (1998), 36 – 53; C. Van Onselen, *New Babylon, New Nineveh: Everyday Life on the Witwatersrand 1886 – 1914* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2001) and G. Cornwell, ‘George Webb Hardy’s “The Black Peril” and the social Meaning of Black Peril’, *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 22, 3 (1996), 441 – 453.

⁶⁵ Van Onselen, *New Babylon, New Nineveh*, 257.

1976 and 1993. Allegations of satanism were not always unfounded, nor were they limited to these moral panics. But during these moments of ‘satanic panic’, such allegations were bolstered by large scale rumour mongering and anxiety that effectively bound the seemingly ‘absurd’ with crimes like paedophilia, rape and physical abuse. Moreover, as this thesis will show, while the discursive boundaries of these moral panics were at times porous, there were distinct lines: articulated, shaped, and disseminated by white moral guardians and white newspapers. As such, the moments of satanic panic discussed in this thesis were largely confined to white Afrikaans and English societies, and were acute expressions of ideological discontent in white South African society.

Essentially, this thesis weaves two objectives: to explore the emergence of the ‘satanic peril’ as a widespread and national threat, and to illustrate the dynamics of the moral panic as both a phenomenon and a mode of analysis in the process. In seeking to add a new dimension to the understanding of cultural change in white South Africa between 1976 and 1993, this thesis first lays the theoretical framework of the ‘moral panic’ in Chapter Two. In critically analysing the concept, Chapter Two suggests a particular interpretation for historians in advocating a specific awareness of the social, geographic, and temporal contours of moral panics, social problems, and discourse. This understanding of the moral panic is then illustrated in the next three chapters of this thesis, which link the broad strokes of socio-political change with the discursive terrain. Chapter Three examines the period of satanic moral panic between 1978 and 1982, and argues that this moral panic reflects the backlash of political and cultural fragmentation in the first four years of P. W. Botha’s premiership. Chapter Four broadens the scope and compares the global and the local between 1983 and 1990. The decade of the 1980s one of considerable change in South Africa, as well as the explosion of a modern witch-hunt in the transnational Satanism Scare that touched, but never lingered in, the South African imagination. Chapter Five returns to South Africa and looks at the virulent satanic moral panic that raged during the country’s transition to democracy, a period in which the local and global discourses discussed in Chapters Three and Four intersected, and in which a variety of local anxieties manifested in acute alarm regarding Satanism and white hegemony. Finally, the arguments of these chapters are drawn together to show change over time, as well as to draw broader conclusions about the value of moral panic analysis to historical study, the limits of this thesis, and suggests further areas of research within the arenas of Satanism, social peril and cultural change in South Africa.

Chapter Two:

Panics and Proxies: Folk Devils, Moral Panics and Theoretical Departures

Introduction

When moral boundaries are undergoing wholesale reappraisal or revision, as, for instance, in the wake of a revolution...moral uncertainty can lead to great anxiety or 'moral panic' and to the demand for a reassertion or redefinition of moral boundaries.¹

The shifting language of morality shapes history, as it is the measure by which every action is weighed, judged and justified. It is the basis upon which absolution is bestowed or denied for the lines crossed and the boundaries drawn. So much of this history is predicated on construction of boundaries – the geographic, temporal, and social lines that direct human experience. Where moral rhetoric is at its most powerful is in the delineation of devils, monsters, and barbarians.² Crowd or mob, protest or riot – the unmasking of threats, the rooting out of devils, and the exclusion of the other are commonplace in the pages of history. Attempts to control moral boundaries and the rhetoric of inclusion and exclusion direct both thought and action: from witch crazes to witch hunts, crusades to perils, scares to panics.

Within this locus of moral boundaries and codes of social behaviour lies the phenomenon of the 'moral panic', a term coined in 1972 by Stanley Cohen.³ A young sociology graduate who left his homeland of South Africa due to its politics, Cohen was interested in the way that social control mechanisms reacted to sensational reports and signs of deviant behaviour.⁴ The

¹ J. C. Davies quoted in A. Hunt, "'Moral Panic' and Moral Language in the Media," *The British Journal of Sociology*, 48, 4 (1997), 632 – 633.

² David Day, for example, had provided numerous examples of conquest narratives wherein 'dehumanizing of the indigenous inhabitants is a common reaction of supplanting societies when they need to justify the dispossession of others and are intent on unleashing a savagery of their own to achieve it.' D. Day, *Conquest: How Societies Overwhelm Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 71. It is also worth noting that morality is often used as a synonym for culture, and vice versa, at least insofar as debates surrounding 'moral relativism' or 'cultural relativism' are concerned. See, for example, J. W. Cook, *Morality and Cultural Difference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

³ Jock Young, a colleague of Cohen, originally used the description 'moral panic' in 1971. However, it was Cohen who used the term 'moral panic' to describe a particular phenomenon and defined the term in the way it is understood today. Noted by E. Goode and N. Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1994), 12.

⁴ Cohen's work drew focussed on the way in which the media and public had responded to the minor acts of vandalism by the so-called 'Mods' and 'Rockers' in the small seaside town of Clacton, 1964. In particular, Cohen highlighted the processes through which the media frenzy and heightened public concern following these

opening paragraph of Cohen's *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (1972) provides the most cited definition of the 'moral panic'. Indeed as a quote, footnote, or endnote this definition remains the cornerstone of moral panic analysis and is worth quoting at length:

Societies appear to be subject, every now and then, to periods of moral panic. A condition, episode, person or group of persons emerges to become defined as a threat to societal values and interests; its nature is presented in a stylized and stereotypical fashion by the mass media; the moral barricades are manned by editors, bishops, politicians and other right-thinking people; socially accredited experts pronounce their diagnoses and solutions; ways of coping are evolved or (more often) resorted to; the condition then disappears, submerges or deteriorates and becomes more visible. Sometimes the object of the panic is quite novel and at other times it is something which has been in existence long enough, but suddenly appears in the limelight. Sometimes the panic passes over and is forgotten, except in folklore and collective memory; at other times it has more serious and long-lasting repercussions and might produce such changes as those in legal and social policy or even in the way the society conceives itself.⁵

The definition underscores the importance moral panic analysis places on the interpretations and perceptions of events or behaviour as either threatening or benign and as demonstrative of a society grappling with change. Clearly evocative, 'moral panic' is one of the academic terms to pass successfully into the general lexicon – soon falling as easily from the tongues of journalists as from those of academics.⁶ The popularity of Cohen's notion of the moral panic lies in that it articulates explicitly a phenomenon long recognized and studied, albeit implicitly. As Erich Goode and Nachmann Ben-Yehuda note: '[w]hilst the moral panic concept is fairly recent, the concrete manifestations of moral panics have been described and analysed for some time in a more or less implicit fashion.'⁷ All too familiar are the warnings capitalized in newspaper headlines, and debated over radio, television, the Internet, and local soapbox. The presentation of some form of crime or youthful activity as a threat to the moral

youthful disturbances solidified the image of the 'mods and rockers' as representative of what was wrong with society. See S. Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics: The Creation of the Mods and Rockers* (Great Britain: St. Martin's Press, 1972). Erich Goode and Nachmann Ben-Yehuda, who worked with Cohen in producing their own work on moral panics, describe him as '[a] South African who left his homeland for political reasons, a radical who was attracted to the causes and activities of underdogs and eager to critique the doings of the smug and the powerful, Cohen found society's reaction to the exuberant activities of rebellious youth both disturbing and intriguing.' Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 23. Such interests were perhaps typical of a young graduate in the heat of the social changes of the 1960s, who looked at the agencies of social control and power with fresh eyes and a great deal more suspicion. For discussions of the cultural and theoretical context of Cohen's theory see D. Garland, 'On the concept of moral panic', *Crime Media Culture*, 4, 1 (2008), 9 – 30.

⁵ Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, 9.

⁶ See D. L. Altheide, 'Moral Panic: From sociological concept to public discourse', *Crime Media Culture*, 5, 1 (2009), 79 – 99 and G. Zajdow, 'Moral Panics: The Old and the New', *Deviant Behaviour*, 29 (2008), 640 – 664.

⁷ Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 11.

integrity of a society is, as Kenneth Thompson notes, nothing new.⁸ Added to the popular vocabulary the press have been able to report with increasing latitude a host of moral panics,⁹ whilst its academic usage has seen the moral panic become a key concept in sociology, criminology and various other disciplines.¹⁰ As it was, in the second edition of *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1980), Cohen noted with some chagrin that the notion of the moral panic was ‘taken as an instant pop sociological response to the problems of the day.’¹¹

However, Cohen’s definition – its meaning clear, its phrasing pithy, and its reality easily apparent – does not always accompany the term. Whilst it has become a fixture in the vocabulary of the press and academics alike, it has also gained a pejorative connotation. Certainly, as Hunt has argued, by the 1980s the popular usage of the term ‘moral panic’ in the press was as a rhetorical (rather than analytical or exploratory) device to nullify public reactions to certain issues and problems.¹² As such, the term ‘has become a form of sociological shorthand or insult to throw at societal reactions’ – a means of dubbing concern as irrational, unfounded and conservative.¹³ As one wary journalist for the *Independent on Sunday* remarked,

⁸ K. Thompson, *Moral Panics* (London: Routledge, 1998), 1.

⁹ The term ‘moral panic’ has been applied to a number of issues including football hooliganism, child abuse, paedophilia, rock music, and human cloning. However, it must be noted that the idea of the ‘moral panic’ has been (and continues to be) employed by the media in the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and Sweden – but has had little or no usage in the South African media.

¹⁰ See, for example, Altheide, ‘Moral Panic: From sociological concept to public discourse’, 79 – 99. Examples of moral panic analysis include G. K. Behlmer, ‘Grave Doubts: Victorian Medicine, Moral Panic, and the Signs of Death’, *The Journal of British Studies*, 42, 2 (2003), 206 – 235; W. Boddy, ‘Approaching “The Untouchables”: Social Science and Moral Panics in Early Sixties Television’, *Cinema Journal*, 35, 4 (1996), 70 – 87; C. E. Cocca, ‘From “Welfare Queen” to “Exploited Teen”: Welfare Dependency, Statutory Rape, and Moral Panic’, *NWSA Journal*, 14, 2 (2002), 56 – 79; S. P. Hier, ‘Raves, Risks and the Ecstasy Panic: A Case Study in the Subversive Nature of Moral Regulation’, *Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 27, 1 (2002), 33 – 57; A. Hunt, ‘The Great Masturbation panic and the Discourses of Moral Regulation in Nineteenth- and Early Twentieth-Century Britain’, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 8, 4 (1998), 575 – 615; J. Lynxwiler and D. Gay, ‘Moral boundaries and deviant music: public attitudes toward heavy metal and rap’, *Deviant Behaviour*, 21, 1 (2000), 63 – 85; A. Schinkel, ‘Contexts of Anxiety: The Moral Panic over “Senseless Violence” in the Netherlands’, *Current Sociology*, 56, 5 (2008), 735 – 756; P. Sikes, ‘At the Eye of the Storm: An Academic(s) Experience of Moral Panic’, *Qualitative Inquiry*, 14, 2 (2008), 235 – 253; M. Welch, E. A. Price and N. Yankey, ‘Moral Panic Over Youth Violence: Wilding and the Manufacture of Menace in the Media’, *Youth Society*, 34, 1 (2002), 3 – 30; R. Wright, ‘“I’d Sell You Suicide”: Pop Music and Moral Panic in the Age of Marilyn Manson’, *Popular Music*, 19, 3 (2000), 365 – 385 and L. Guy, ‘“Moral Panic” or Pejorative Labelling? Rethinking the Mazengarb inquiry into Underage sex in the Hutt Valley in 1954’, *Journal of Religious History*, 33, 4 (2009), 435 – 451.

¹¹ Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, i.

¹² Essentially this implies that the meaning of moral panic is less clear-cut than it appears and is employed differently by academics and the media. See Hunt, ‘“Moral Panic” and Moral Language in the Media’, 629 – 648.

¹³ K. Thompson quoted in P. Jenkins: *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Great Britain* (New York: Aldine du Gruyter, 1992), 8.

Moral Panic is one of those deflating phrases used by sociologists and other allegedly impartial students of human behaviour to condescend to excitements among the general populace...The doctoral message is calming: do not worry, we have been here before, your concerns are and ersatz compound manufactured by the media, a few odd bishops, strident voices from the left and the right, moralists and nostalgists [*sic*] of all kinds.¹⁴

Defining something as a moral panic became increasingly understood not as a diagnosis bred out of concern but rather as a diagnosis as no cause for concern. Thus ‘moral panic’ has come to be a term of chastisement, seeming to imply an irrational or insincere reaction to an imagined threat.¹⁵

Certainly, as Heir has noted, the diverse meanings associated with concept have divided academics on the analytical value of the concept,¹⁶ and many critics decry it as an ‘ideologically loaded or value-laden’ term.¹⁷ Students of moral panic analysis, including Cohen’s colleague Jock Young, have defended the term by explaining that ‘moral panic’ refers not to an irrational reaction but to one that is *disproportionate*. Cohen also explained that moral panics seldom occur without impetus, but rather characterize situations that are sensationalized, exaggerated and based on little more than seemingly ‘self-evident facts’.¹⁸ However, even staunch advocates of moral panic theory have asserted that the word ‘panic’ – the culprit in the term that appears to imply irrationality – seems something of ‘an unfortunate choice’.¹⁹ Moreover, critics like McRobbie and Thornton have interpreted ‘moral panic’ as an anthropomorphic term that ‘depicts a complex society as a single person who

¹⁴ *Independent on Sunday*, February 21, 1993. Quoted in Hunt, “‘Moral Panic’ and Moral Language in the Media”, 641.

¹⁵ For example, in reaction to a young PhD student’s research into prostitution in an area of Melbourne – titled *Sex, Money and Power: Deconstructing Moral Panic around Street Prostitution in St Kilda* – an irate Andrew Bolt decried the use of ‘moral panic’ as little more than a ‘buzz-word of the post modern academic.’ Bolt continued, ‘moral panic, which means being so silly as to worry, rather than just let people wreck themselves and be wrecked. Because what’s morality anyway?’ See A. Bolt, ‘When moral panic is immoral’, *Sunday Herald Sun* (Melbourne), June 6, 2004.

¹⁶ S. P. Hier, ‘Conceptualizing Moral Panic through a Moral Economy of Harm’, *Critical Sociology*, 28, 3 (2002), 311 – 312.

¹⁷ Thompson, *Moral Panic*, 10.

¹⁸ Cohen (1980) and C. Critcher (2006). See B. E. Denham, ‘Folk Devils, News Icons and the Construction of Moral Panics’, *Journalism Studies*, 9, 6 (2008), 946. Thompson and Hunt have explored the changes in the term’s usage and reception in the media and public. See Thomson, *Moral Panic* and Hunt, “‘Moral Panic’ and Moral Language in the Media”, 629 – 648.

¹⁹ Thompson, *Moral Panic*, p. viii. In an attempt to avoid the difficulties associated with the term ‘panic’, the editors of *Behaving Badly: Social Panic and Moral Outrage – Victorian and Modern Parallels* (2003) chose to refer to periods of ‘moral outrage’ occurring within a broader period of ‘social panic’. The distinction is uncomfortable, as periods of social anxiety are far more likely to produce moments of panic, moral or otherwise. See J. Rowbotham and K. Stevenson, eds, *Behaving Badly: Social Panic and Moral Outrage – Victorian and Modern Parallels* (England: Ashgate, 2003), 8 – 9 and J. Bourke, ‘Fear and Anxiety: Writing about Emotion in Modern History’, *History Workshop Journal*, 55, (2003), 111 – 133.

experiences sudden fear about its virtue' in asserting that the term may prove more obscurant than illuminating.²⁰ Compounding these terminological difficulties still further, Cohen later pointed out that the term referred not to an actual theory or model, but more simply to an abstract concept.²¹ This prompts, particularly perhaps in the theory-wary historian, the question of why the concept of the moral panic should be utilized at all. As noted, 'moral panic' is a recent term for a relatively old phenomenon,²² one that has been studied without resorting to so troublesome a term.²³ Even then, critics argue, it points not to a theory but to a fluid concept that has allowed a great deal of interpretation of the same phenomenon to fall under a single term.

Despite such critique, the moral panic, as both a term and a mode of analysis, brings to the fore the dynamics at work within a historically recognizable phenomenon during which the moral contours of a society are shifted and redefined. As Goode and Ben-Yehuda assert, '[h]aving a specific concept to classify and capture the phenomena enables us to notice elements and dynamics that we would have otherwise missed.'²⁴ This chapter explores the usefulness of the moral panic concept to historians. In laying the theoretical foundation of this thesis, this chapter evaluates the dynamics that moral panic analysis can expose, as well as the value that moral panic study holds for historical research. This chapter contends that the moral panic is both an actual phenomenon and a mode of analysis, and that it occurs within both the discursive and the objective arenas of human experience. In clarifying these dynamics, this chapter points to value of placing the moral panic within its historical context and within the nexus of its social, temporal, and geographic boundaries.²⁵ Moreover, this chapter will argue that rather than 'unfortunate' or misguided, the term 'moral panic' elucidates clearly these dynamics – creating a useful lens through which to study the flux of moral discourse, social boundaries, and cultural change over time.

²⁰ A. McRobbie and S. L. Thornton, 'Rethinking "Moral Panic" for Multi-Mediated Social Worlds', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 46, 4 (1995), 567.

²¹ Denham, 'Folk Devils, News Icons and the Construction of Moral Panics', 946.

²² Goode and Ben-Yehuda provided three examples from the American context of precursors to modern moral panics (in addition to case studies of moral panics from different periods of history) including the Prohibition Movement (1900 – 1920), the Crusade for Anti-Marijuana legislation in America during the 1930s, the debates and legislation regarding Sexual Psychopaths between the 1930s and the 1950s. See Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 14 – 19.

²³ See Chapter One.

²⁴ Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 11 – 12.

²⁵ More recent scholarship has begun to place more emphasis on the geographic and temporal dynamics of moral panics. See Jenkins: *Intimate Enemies*; Hier, 'Conceptualizing Moral Panic through a Moral Economy of Harm', 311 – 334; A. Rohloff and S. Wright, 'Moral Panic and Social Theory: Beyond the Heuristic', *Current Sociology*, 58, 3 (2010), 403 – 419 and Garland, 'On the concept of moral panic', 9 – 30.

The Moral Panic as a Phenomenon

A great deal has been written, on a continuum between admonition and approbation, about the surges of social sentiment and the spur to action. Fads and crazes, revolutions and protests, activism and terrorism – there are a variety of ways in which panic and anxiety manifest themselves. Certainly a great deal of writing on the phenomenon of the moral panic has devoted itself to the latter, more contentious, half of the term. However, the ‘moral’ of moral panic demarcates the phenomenon in question from the broader history of social problems and fear narratives, which are both geographically and temporally more complex than they appear. As Thompson notes, the ‘reason for calling it a *moral* panic is precisely to indicate that the perceived threat is not to something mundane – such as economic output or educational standards – but a threat to the social order itself or an idealized (ideological) conception of some part of it.’²⁶

Moral discourse is integral to the study of the moral panic, and it is here that the creation of the folk devil and the patrolling of moral boundaries occur under the divergent voices of interest groups, experts, politicians, and concerned members of the public. It is also in this process of meaning-making that moral boundaries are constructed, and where convergence – a process key to moral panics and its analytical value for comparative history – emerges. This section looks at the concept of the moral panic more closely in exploring each half of the term and the way in which it forms a mode of analysis for a historical phenomenon. In exploring the discursive element of the *moral* panic, it becomes clear that the ‘moral’ half of the term directs the analysis to both the specific concern of the panic and the broader discursive realm in which moral boundaries are enacted. The more controversial half of the term *moral panic*, so often taken to imply irrationality, is explored by taking into account the objective indicators of the moral panic as a phenomenon, as well as the theoretical stance that ‘moral panic’ takes as a mode of analysis.

²⁶ Thompson, *Moral Panic*, 8.

The *Moral Panic*

Debates about the moral integrity of society are neither new nor specific to moments of heightened social anxiety.²⁷ Similarly, discourse is neither static nor cohesive, but at particular historical junctions might be heightened or shift dramatically (which Hier has referred to as the ‘volatility of moralization’).²⁸ The language of moral panics does not necessarily represent a break from this discourse but rather a process of dragging it to the fore, adding to it, and placing it in the spotlight of the public stage. This sudden and effective visibility of a deviant in society, and its subsequent codification as a ‘folk devil’, may serve to reassert an established system of values whilst creating a sense of social solidarity in the face of a perceived threat.²⁹

The folk devil is essentially a deviant and shares its characteristics. The act of scapegoating produces something of rock to which a society – or segments of a society – might cling when the processes of change seem more chaotic than usual. As John Curra notes,

Deviance is branded as dysfunctional, unhealthy, evil, dangerous, or abnormal. The successful definition of alternate realities as inauthentic, pathological, or deviant reinforces the dominant view of reality and makes it appear more immutable and concrete than it actually is.³⁰

Although the perceived threat of a moral panic usually possesses an objective dimension, the way in which it is stigmatised through the public media sees the construction of a folk devil replete with deviant characteristics.

This process invariably strips the folk devil (and its associates) of any positive characteristics and places on them the burden of public blame.³¹ Such a process of interpellation is

²⁷ See, for example, G. Pearson, *Hooligan: A History of Respectable Fears* (London: Macmillan Press, 1983).

²⁸ S. P. Hier, ‘Thinking Beyond Moral Panic: Risk, Responsibility, and the politics of moralization’, *Theoretical Criminology*, 12, 2 (2008), 173 – 190. Foucault’s definition of discourse, as noted by Thompson, is ‘a group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing – the knowledge about a particular topic at a particular historical moment.’ Thompson, *Moral Panic*, 24.

²⁹ As Emile Durkheim, the father of deviance studies, noted of the social dimension of the deviant in society: ‘The deviant individual violates rules of conduct which the rest of the community holds in high respect; when these people come together to express their outrage over the offense and bear witness against the offender, they develop a tighter bond of solidarity than existed earlier.’ E. Durkheim quoted in Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies*, 4. Durkheim, Erikson, and Cohen championed the importance of panics in reasserting an established value system. See Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies*, 7; Garland, ‘On the concept of moral panic’, 9 – 30 and (more broadly) P. Smith, ‘Durkheim and Criminology: Reconstructing the Legacy’, *Australian and New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 41, 3 (2008), 333 – 344.

³⁰ J. Curra, *The Relativity of Deviance* (California: Sage Publications, 2000), 8.

³¹ Thompson, *Moral Panic*, 4.

symptomatic of moral panics, as Goode and Ben-Yehuda note '[a]ll moral panics, by their very nature, identify, denounce, and attempt to root out folk devils.'³² However, it is important to note that whilst a particular folk devil becomes symbolic of all that is wrong with a society, a vehicle of social expression so to speak, it is not the *source* of the moral panic.³³ As the scapegoat, the folk devil essentially acts as a straw man upon which a society can pin its problems and present it to the young, naïve, or morally wavering as something of a 'moral scarecrow'.³⁴ Through a process of symbolization, in which 'images are made much sharper than reality', the folk devil becomes representative of various social ills through the further processes of convergence and amplification.³⁵ Convergence occurs when two or more activities are linked together in the image of the folk devil, that is two or more separate acts are merged into a single threat, thereby amplifying the threat potential of both.³⁶ Together these processes of symbolization, convergence and amplification feed into and from one another. To which Cohen noted in the third edition of *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (2004), 'successful moral panics owe their appeal to their ability to find points of resonance with wider anxieties.'³⁷ Moreover, as Hunt has noted,

One kind of threat or challenge to society seems larger, more menacing, if it can be mapped together with other apparently similar phenomena...As issues and groups are projected across the thresholds, it becomes easier to mount legitimate campaigns of control against them.³⁸

This process of meaning-making, in which the image of the folk devil is solidified as both a threat to society and a symptom of social decay, usually evokes a nostalgia in which the past is presented in an idealized fashion and juxtaposed with the present. The seemingly unchecked flux of the present is contrasted to the apparent stasis of a time past in which morals were certain and society unencumbered by current social ills. Of this nostalgia

³² Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 29.

³³ Arnold Hunt sees the folk devil as the object of the moral panic as 'the moral panic must have an object, it must be about something.' Hunt, "'Moral Panic" and Moral Language in the Media', 631. However, as noted, whilst the folk devil is the object of the moral panic, the various anxieties of a society are attached to this object – and the folk devil should not be mistaken for the moral panic itself. See Hier, 'Thinking beyond moral panic', 176.

³⁴ This is not to say that the moral discourse is one-sided, or that the 'folk devils' never challenge the charges laid against them. See McRobbie and Thornton, 'Rethinking "Moral Panic" for Multi-Mediated Social Worlds', 559 – 574.

³⁵ Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 28.

³⁶ Such notions did not spring fresh from the field of moral panic scholarship; rather it was cultivated in from earlier works. Leslie Wilkins put the concept of 'deviance amplification' forward in 1964 to describe the process in which more powerful groups in a society denote other, smaller groups as deviant – effectively reaffirming accepted moral codes. See Denham, 'Folk Devils, News Icons and the Construction of Moral Panics', 946.

³⁷ Quoted in Garland, 'On the concept of moral panic', 12.

³⁸ A. Hunt, 'Anxiety and Social Explanation: Some Anxieties about Anxiety', *Journal of Social History*, 32, 3 (1999), 511.

Pearson asserts, ‘we are dealing with a form of moral dodo-ism, marked by its inability to keep pace with a moving world and to adapt its complaints to sometimes dramatic social alterations.’³⁹ Whilst the past, or aspects of it, become an idealized ‘golden age’, this discourse also sharpens the boundary between ‘Us’ and ‘Them’. Sometimes the folk devil is perceived as having no regard for social mores whatsoever, and is believed to transgress – indeed revel – in taboo behaviour. Rape, abortion, cannibalism, homosexuality, incest, murder, deformity, disease – taboos often come into play when decrying some ‘new’ form of behaviour or re-emergent deviant. As Mary Douglas argued, taboos correspond to social boundaries, as they are produced by persistent social anxiety regarding the solidarity of social borders and the integrity of social mores.⁴⁰ In a milieu now perceived as unsafe, the image of children at risk heightens the anxiety experienced during a moral panic. Physically weaker, their health and safety the charge of society, children occupy an image of innocence and potential, and thus symbolically represent the current and future health of a society. Thus the image of the child endangered drastically increases the threat of the folk devil, its deviant behaviour all the more evil, and the problem intensified in the eyes of the public.⁴¹ As such, folk devils are created out of both new and pre-existing cultural elements. Scraps of rumour and urban legend, off-cuts of old grievances and the fresh material of social change are sewn into familiar narrative patterns regarding evil and wickedness. Effectively the process is one in which ‘a full-scale demonology takes place by which the members of a new evil category are placed “in the gallery of contemporary folk-devils.”’⁴²

Often the more fervent and stirring voices calling out against the folk devil belong to so-called moral entrepreneurs or moral crusaders. Sociologist Howard Becker coined the term ‘moral entrepreneur’ in describing those individuals or groups who seek to provide a society of certain moral codes or rules.⁴³ As Becker asserted,

Whenever rules are created and applied we should be alive to the possible presence of an enterprising individual or group. Their activities can be properly called ‘moral enterprise’ for what they are enterprising about is the

³⁹ Pearson also asserted that ‘[w]hat this historical journey has revealed to us, by contrast, is a seamless tapestry of fears and complaints about the deteriorated present; a long and connected history that makes plain the shortcomings of the more usual view of our cultural inheritance which is severely limited by its simplistic nostalgia for “the old way of life”.’ See Pearson, *Hooligan*, 207 – 211.

⁴⁰ Noted in Hunt, ‘Anxiety and Social Explanation’, 511.

⁴¹ See Thompson, *Moral Panics* and C. Critcher, *Moral Panics and the Media* (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2003).

⁴² Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 29 – 30.

⁴³ Becker elaborated the term ‘moral entrepreneur’ in a case study of legislation regarding marijuana in America in *Outsiders: Studies in the Sociology of Deviance* (1963).

creation of a new fragment of the moral constitution of society, it's code of right and wrong.⁴⁴

Becker described the moral entrepreneur as bound to an absolute ethic and following a dogmatic distinction between what they perceive as good and evil with little or no qualification. There is always a strong presence of moral entrepreneurs during a moral panic, as this thesis will show. Indeed, as Hier contends, it is only through the claims of moral entrepreneurs that folk devils become symbolic of social ills. Presented as fact in the media, these claims together with the process of news-making solidify the image of the folk devil.⁴⁵ Unsurprisingly, then, it is usually the moral entrepreneur whose concerns match those of the moral panic who finds the public stage more welcoming because there is a more attentive audience.⁴⁶ There are a host of voices – often discordant – surrounding the folk devil during a moral panic. These voices speak from various sectors of society, alerting the public to the threat and the apparent omens of moral decay. Whilst police issue warnings and tighten public security, experts step forward, politicians reassure their constituents or blame their opponents, interest groups lobby their cause and their remedy, while the anxious public watches and responds. Certainly, for Cohen moral panics were the result of ‘a complex chain of social interaction’,⁴⁷ if not the conjunction of social processes including the overt actions of moral entrepreneurs, claims makers, and media with the underlying processes of cultural change and anxiety.⁴⁸

The mouthpiece of these voices is the media. Newspapers, magazines, television, radio, pamphlets, bulletins, posters, and more recently the internet (with its blogs, chat rooms, and video sites) – the pervasive presence of media serves as *the* public platform. Information

⁴⁴ Quoted in Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies*, 6.

⁴⁵ Hier, ‘Thinking Beyond Moral Panic’, 176.

⁴⁶ Note that neither moral entrepreneurs nor their concerns are specific to moral panics.

⁴⁷ Hier, ‘Thinking Beyond Moral Panic’, 176.

⁴⁸ Much of the work on moral panics has been devoted to asking how they occur and who is responsible for them. Cohen’s *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* looked specifically at the symbolization process and the reactions of society and social control mechanisms. Inspired by Cohen’s work – Stuart Hall and his colleagues offered a more Marxist and teleological understanding of moral panics and deviance, and turned attention directly to the operations of the State. The publication of S. Hall et al., *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1978) was well received and its emphasis on the political motivations of interest groups has resounded in subsequent work. The approach of *Policing the Crisis* was later seen as the ‘elite engineered’ model of moral panics in Erich Goode and Nachmann Ben-Yehuda’s work *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (1994). Goode and Ben-Yehuda also noted two other models – a ‘middle-grounds’ model seen in Cohen’s work, and a ‘grass roots’ model that they saw as occurring in the moral panic of the European witch hunts. The ‘model’ used throughout this thesis is the ‘middle grounds’, ‘interest group’ or ‘classic’ moral panic epitomized by Cohen’s original work. The interest group explanation of the moral panic sees it as the unintended or unanticipated outcome of the actions of moral entrepreneurs at particular moments of social anxiety.

about a society's normative contours is largely gleaned from the mass media, as Cohen notes:

[The mass media] informs us about right and wrong, about the boundaries beyond which one should not venture and about the shapes that the devil can assume. The gallery of folk types – heroes and saints, as well as fools, villains and devils – is publicized not just in oral-tradition and face-to-face contact but to much larger audiences and with much greater dramatic resources.⁴⁹

According to Cohen the moral panic is birthed through the sensational claims made and disseminated by the media. In fact a large part of his study is devoted to the role of the mass media in the creation of folk devils and moral panics because, as Cohen argues, the mass media 'devote a great deal of space to deviance: sensational crimes, scandals, bizarre happenings, and strange goings on.'⁵⁰ As such, it is the press who usually appears to lead the charge of the moral panic, if only through reporting and advocating the claims of moral entrepreneurs and interests groups. Of course, sensational stories sell more copies, feeding into the concern and anxiety of the public who become ever more likely to lap up the next story as the moral panic unfolds. For Cohen this is an unintended by-product of news making. The media, Cohen notes, 'have long operated as agents of moral indignation in their own right: even if they are not self-consciously engaged in crusading or much-raking, their very reporting of certain "facts" can be sufficient to generate concern, anxiety, indignation or panic.'⁵¹ This spiralling process is easy to identify, and indeed integral to the moral panic. This is particularly overt in the creation of 'looping effect' wherein the reaction of society enacts on the thing being responded to and transforms it – evident in the occurrence of symbolization, convergence and amplification.⁵²

However, some scholars hold that the press is directly responsible for moral panics and argue that the media purposefully instigate moral panics in order to sell newspapers.⁵³ Whilst they urge the need to take into account the growing complexity of modern media, McRobbie and Thornton, for example, see the moral panic as the *goal* of the media rather than a

⁴⁹ Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, 17. Also see S. Cohen, ed., *Images of Deviance* (England: Penguin Books, 1971) and S. Cohen and J. Young, eds, *The manufacture of news: Social problems, deviance and the mass media* (Great Britain: Constable and Co, 1973).

⁵⁰ Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, 17.

⁵¹ Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, 16.

⁵² Described as such by Hacking in *The Social Construction of What?* (2000) cited in Garland, 'On the concept of moral panic', 14.

⁵³ This process is usually referred to as an 'amplification spiral' or 'signification spiral'. As to the role of the media in moral panics, see Critcher, *Moral Panics and the Media*; Denham, 'Folk Devils, News Icons and the Construction of Moral Panics', 945 – 961; Altheide, 'Moral Panic', 79 – 99 and Hunt, "'Moral Panic" and Moral Language in the Media', 629 -648.

consequence.⁵⁴ Although this argument is popular in media studies, it is contested. One problem, as Heir points out, is the need to differentiate between a moral panic and media sensationalism.⁵⁵ This further emphasizes the need for analytical clarity when defining an event as a moral panic, given the relatively eclectic scope of meanings applied to the term and its usages in popular and academic discourse. Essentially, it is misleading to regard the broad scope of the media and the news-seeking and news-making press as synonymous. Rather the press is a facet of the media, and it is in the press that issues are often sensationalized, distorted, and exaggerated.⁵⁶ As such, the press acts as both a voice as well as a mouthpiece in the moral panic – reporting, commenting, and framing its subject matter.⁵⁷

The discursive process of the moral panic lies in the recognition and codification of a social deviant. Now categorized, this deviant is decried and demonized as a threat to social values by moral entrepreneurs and the public alike. The folk devil emerges, a hybrid creature that is part real and part invention. Together with a nostalgic ‘remembrance’ of more secure times since waned, the creation of the folk devil sharply demarcates social boundaries between ‘good’ and ‘bad’. Spurring society into action, negative elements merge together as various concerns are brought to the public platform through the media, often invoking fears surrounding taboos and children at risk. Through the process of symbolization the folk devil comes to represent social evil. During this process, convergence implicitly and explicitly links social activities and anxieties to the folk devil – amplifying the threat potential of both.⁵⁸ The net effect of this discursive process is the strengthening of moral boundaries through a debate of society’s mores on a public platform as the emotionally charged discourse, sensational stories, and the remedies proposed work to draw out voices from the social terrain.

⁵⁴ McRobbie and Thornton, ‘Rethinking “Moral Panic” for Multi-Mediated Social Worlds’, 559 – 574.

⁵⁵ Hier, ‘Conceptualizing Moral Panic through a Moral Economy of Harm’, 331.

⁵⁶ These aspects are crucial in determining whether or not the response is disproportionate, a key indicator of a moral panic. The media is also the arena in which the label of ‘deviant’ may be conferred, and where a process that Joseph Gusfield referred to as ‘moral passage’ may occur. Cohen uses Gusfield’s example of the ‘problem drinker’ whose description in the media changes from ‘repentant’ to ‘enemy’ to ‘sick’ – following society’s ideas about what causes this behaviour and what its threat potential is. See Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, 16 – 17. It is also worth taking into account the extent to which reports may be second hand, often repeated from other media sources. As Baudrillard noted ‘We are in a postmodern epoch of media culture in which the public sphere is more like a hall of mirrors where all that exists is media reflections of other media representations.’ Quoted in Thompson, *Moral Panics*, 24.

⁵⁷ As McRobbie and Thornton assert ‘mass media both frame subculture as major events and disseminate them.’ McRobbie and Thornton, ‘Rethinking “Moral Panic” for Multi-Mediated Social Worlds’, 565.

⁵⁸ As Thompson notes, ‘Convergence occurs when two or more activities are linked in the process of signification as to implicitly or explicitly draw parallels between them...the net effect is amplification, not in the real events being described but in their threat potential for society.’ See Thompson, *Moral Panics*, 20.

The Moral *Panic*

This moral discourse – with its entrepreneurs, lobby groups and campaigns to put right the apparent moral upset of society, its rumour and media storm of sensational news reports, and its currents of nostalgia and public concern – is fundamental to explaining the moral panic. Certainly it is nearly axiomatic of moral panic literature to note that the phenomenon occurs during social upheaval, economic crisis or political upset – those ‘troubled times’ where society is more anxious and on guard.⁵⁹ With tensions running high, moral panics are characterized by an especially rapid process of meaning-making during which the mass media reflect and disseminate information and images that are both bred from and fertilize the social imagination. As Goode and Ben-Yehuda have asserted, ‘[a]lthough myth-making characterizes all societies at all times, during times of the moral panic, the process is especially rapid and a given myth is especially likely to be believed on relatively little evidence.’⁶⁰ The aforementioned processes of symbolization, convergence, and amplification are equally telling of the rapid nature of this moralization discourse – alluding to the volatile nature of the moral panic phenomenon. The concept of convergence, for example, appears to imply that public anxiety ‘boils over’ after a number of concerns are combined and amplified, typified in the panicked response and call for overt action. Essentially the ‘moral’ half of the term ‘moral panic’ informs as to the very specific subject matter or content of the phenomenon, dislocating it from broader social anxiety and scares which are not necessarily moral in content. Similarly the word ‘panic’ alludes as to the nature of the moral panic and differentiates the phenomenon from moral discourse in general, as well as from other forms of collective behaviour.⁶¹

There are several indicators that reveal the social process as markedly different from other periods and identify it as a moral panic. These are particularly important in establishing the analytical boundaries of the moral panic and the need to distinguish between media sensationalism, the public reaction to a threat, and a moral panic. Whilst measurement remains the most overt problem in moral panic analysis, the indicators of consensus, concern,

⁵⁹ Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 32.

⁶⁰ Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 25.

⁶¹ Hier has made a similar suggestion in noting that ‘volatility of moralization’ during a moral panic in contrast to ‘moralization’ in general. Pearson has noted how similar anxieties regarding children, immorality, and weak parenthood have occurred together with a nostalgic discourse regarding an idealized past throughout history and are not as novel as they appear. See Hier, ‘Thinking Beyond Moral Panic’, 173 – 190 and Petersen, *Hooligans* (1983).

hostility, volatility, and disproportion do much to distinguish the moral panic from scares, crusades, and sheer media hype. The process of defining and responding to the folk devil and the threats it represents is on-going, but whilst moral panics are characterized by debate their reality depends on some degree of consensus. In order for a moral panic to occur there must be broad agreement among members of a society, or a section of society, that the folk devil is a threat that must be addressed. Unsurprisingly this consensus depends on an intensified concern in the public, given that the amplification of concern spurs the machinations of symbolization and convergence further.⁶² With this concern comes increased anxiety and hostility toward the folk devil, growing with the folk devil which comes to represent a host of social ills. This tends to result in the perception of society as out of control, afflicted with rampant moral decay, and in dire need of immediate action to prevent the destruction of all that a society values. Given the accumulative nature and rapid shift of moral anxiety into moral panic, the phenomenon is characterized by volatility. This can be observed in the tendency of moral panics to appear and diminish relatively quickly, the heightened concern over a problem often dissipating even if the problem does not.⁶³

The moral panic is also characterised by disproportion. If disproportion is not shown as an element of the moral panic phenomenon the analysis may well implode.⁶⁴ Disproportion, then, is the premise upon which the moral panic rests. The element of disproportion places on the moral panic analysis the onus of showing that the reaction to a perceived threat is out of proportion to the objective condition, or that ‘objective molehills have been made into subjective mountains.’⁶⁵ However, measuring disproportion can be a murky task. As Stabile,

⁶² There is the assumption here that the media publicity of a threat reflects opinion and popularity, and certainly Stabile’s argument that the public are not ‘passive dupes who blindly consume information’ is warranted. Again this points to the need avoid conflating media sensationalism with public opinion. The analysis of various media and public participation through letters to the editor, blogs, creation of societies, and popular discussion reported by the press aid in establishing the public reaction during the period. See C. A. Stabile, ‘Conspiracy or Consensus? Reconsidering the Moral Panic’, *Journal of Communication Inquiry*, 25, 3 (2001), 258 – 278.

⁶³ Thompson, *Moral Panics*, 9.

⁶⁴ In *Policing the Crisis*, Hall and his colleagues emphasize disproportion in their definition of the moral panic: ‘When the official reaction to a person, group of persons or series of events is *out of all proportion* to the actual threat offered, when “experts”, in the form of police chiefs, the judiciary, politicians and editors *perceive* the threat in all but identical forms, and appear to talk “with one voice” of rates, diagnoses, prognoses and solutions, when the media representations universally stress “sudden and dramatic” increases (in numbers involved or events) and ‘novelty’, above and beyond what a sober, realistic appraisal could sustain, then we believe it is appropriate to speak of the beginnings of a moral panic.’ S. Hall et al, *Policing the Crisis*, 16.

⁶⁵ B. Jones, N. J. Gallagher and J. A. McFalls, ‘Toward a unified models for social problems theory’, *Journal for the Theory of Social Behaviour*, 19, (1989), 4. Quoted in Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 36. Essentially, disproportion is used to counter claims that moral panic analysis is value-laden as the notion that a reaction is out of proportion is not the same as saying that a reaction is irrational. This is encapsulated by Walker who writes, ‘[a]t such moments, panic is indeed the appropriate word: a crushing, contagious fear that

among others, has noted ‘fear is a notoriously difficult emotion to pin down or measure. Like dreams, to a large degree, fear is subject to condensation and displacement.’⁶⁶ However, what makes measurement particularly difficult is that often data about the objective threat, so required for a ‘sober, realistic appraisal’, is untenable.⁶⁷ Nonetheless, when navigating the terrain where the objective and subjective overlap, the moral panic scholar needs to demonstrate that the dramatic social reaction to the perceived threat was not supported by the available evidence, rather than dismissing the objective dimension of the threat altogether.⁶⁸

Disproportion *is* measurable. Goode and Ben-Yehuda provide four indicators: the exaggeration of figures, the fabrication of figures, the existence of other harmful conditions, and change over time. A great deal of the language employed during moral panics includes the statistics of the crimes, deaths, pain, or costs suffered at the hands of the folk devil – and such claims are almost always exaggerated. Often the statistics projected during moral panics are disproportionate to those found elsewhere, or have no supporting data whatsoever. In each case, Goode and Ben-Yehuda note, disproportion is measurable between what is *claimed* and what is *verifiable*. Disproportion is also indicated when the heightened concern and hostility toward a folk devil does not run parallel to the attention paid to other conditions which may prove just as threatening. Perhaps the most telling indicator of disproportion, however, lies in the ‘discovery’ or ‘rediscovery’ of social problems whose existence before or after the moral panic does not garner the same concern or hostility. Essentially disproportion points to the dislocation between the perception and the actuality of an event, person, or group of persons as harbingers of social decay.⁶⁹

prompts people to behave hysterically. The issue isn't whether we're right to be afraid. It's whether we're responding rationally to our perfectly justified fear.’ J. Walker, ‘Panic Attacks: Drawing the Thin Line Between Caution and Hysteria after September 11th’, *Reason Magazine*, March 2002, <http://www.reason.com/news/show/28345.html>, available: 3 May 2011.

⁶⁶ Stabile, ‘Conspiracy or Consensus?’, 260. Also see Bourke, ‘Fear and Anxiety’, 111 – 133.

⁶⁷ This is the main critique of moral panic analysis by scholars like Waddington and Ungar. See S. Ungar, ‘Moral Panic versus risk society: the implications of the changing sites of social anxiety’, *British Journal of Sociology*, 52, 2 (2001), 271 – 291. Goode and Ben-Yehuda outline the critique made by Waddington of Hall et al’s *Policing the Crisis*. Goode and Ben-Yehuda negate this critique in noting that disproportion can be measured. See Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 42 – 43.

⁶⁸ Denham, ‘Folk Devils, News Icons and the construction of Moral Panics’, 946 and Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 36 – 38. Certainly scholars have had moments of treading carefully, as Garland has pointed out with reference to the way in which a number of ‘moral panic’ sociologists (including Goode and Jenkins) avoided ascribing the term ‘moral panic’ to the somewhat hysterical and overtly moralized reaction to the events of 9/11 by both the press and public. Garland suggests that the reason for this is an ethical one, and this certainly betrays the inevitable rhetorical aspect of analysis. See Garland, ‘On the concept of moral panic’, 24 and Walker, ‘Panic Attacks’, <http://www.reason.com/news/show/28345.html>, available: 3 May 2011

⁶⁹ Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 43 – 45.

Neither the moral discourse nor the activities of moral entrepreneurs are specific to moral panics. Essentially the indicators of the moral panic – the folk devil, processes of symbolization, convergence and amplification, consensus, concern, hostility, volatility, and disproportion – work to separate the moral panic phenomenon from other forms of moral discourse and collective behaviour. Moral panics are characterized by a rapid process of meaning-making and debate surrounding the moral fibre of a society. The particular inflections of this discursive practice together with the heightened and dramatic public response to the folk devil are identifiably anomalous: they can be recognized as a separate phenomenon, a *moral panic*. The moral panic cannot be divorced from its historical context but can be identified from the day-to-day flow of moral discourse and social change, the term ‘moral panic’ draws to our attention this necessary dislocation.

The ‘Moral Panic’ as a Mode of Analysis

The moral panic is an integral facet of social problems. Indeed the moral panic often characterizes a specific moment on the arc of a social problem’s development. Like social problems, moral panics are generated by the way in which a society defines a condition or form of behaviour as undesirable, and is characterized by waves of public sentiment and calls to remedy the problem. The moral panic is unique, however, in that it possesses a folk devil and is characteristically volatile – the problem and panic discovered and ensued by an almost feverish alarm which then subsides.⁷⁰ Whilst the moral panic is an identifiable social phenomenon, with a clear moral discourse and indicators, using the term ‘moral panic’ implies that it is also a mode of analysis predicated upon certain approaches and assumptions. Whilst the indicators of a moral panic are relatively clear, like all historical subject matter the interpretations and emphases of moral panic analyses in themselves are less so. Moral panic analysis is ‘self-reflexive’ insofar as the analysis enacts on the phenomenon.⁷¹ It is based on the approach of social constructionism, discussed below, which draws attention to the nature of social and moral boundaries to blur and change. Indeed it is this shifting of boundaries with which moral panics are preoccupied, and which adds to the value that this avenue of study offers for deeper insight into the underlying fears and desires of a society.

⁷⁰ Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 98 – 99.

⁷¹ Garland, among others, has alluded to the self-reflexive nature of moral panic analysis. Garland, ‘On the concept of moral panic’, 12. Such a notion is relatively well established in historical research which notes, if somewhat uncomfortably, the difference between the past and history.

Moral Panic Analysis and Social Constructionism

Cohen's work is built on the transactional approach to deviance, which holds that deviance is not an inherent quality but a socially constructed one. Closely connected with the notion of the moral entrepreneur, Becker explained,

Deviance is created by society...social groups create deviance by making the rules whose infraction constitutes deviance and by applying those rules to particular persons and labelling them as outsiders. From this point of view, deviance is not a quality of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application by others of rules and sanctions to an 'offender'. The deviant is one to whom the label has successfully been applied; deviant behaviour is behaviour that people so label.⁷²

However, as Cohen was quick to remind that this transactional approach does not imply that the label of 'deviant' is arbitrarily applied to unsuspecting persons who have committed no wrong, that so-called 'deviants' quietly accept this social demarcation, or 'that harmless conditions are wilfully inflated into social problems.'⁷³ What it does offer is the ability to look at change over time, particularly in the way in which a society perceives itself.

In this way, moral panic study fits into the broader field of anxiety analysis, which rests on the notion that certain public responses are manifestations of deep-seated and often unacknowledged fears.⁷⁴ As noted, whilst the moral panic *centres* on the folk devil, it does not *spring* from the folk devil. Instead, underlying fears of a society are coded into the folk devil and what it represents. As Ingebreetsen notes of the monster,

Boundaries between representation and reality are always permeable; hence, the anxiety over what is seen and what may be looked at: the one who shapes the imagination controls the heart. Understood in this light, monsters themselves, or their bodies, are texts of contested meaning since to 'write' the civic monster means spelling out, quite literally, what a populace fears.⁷⁵

In *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, the public concern about, and hostility towards the mods and rockers expressed deeper concerns about youth culture, promiscuity and post-war

⁷² Quoted in Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, 12 – 13. According to Cohen this approach, defined by Becker, had gained 'canonical' status in the sociological approach to deviance. Subsequent writers have emphasized Kai Erikson's formulation: 'Deviance is not a property *inherent* in certain forms of behaviour; it is a property *conferred upon* those forms by audiences which directly or indirectly witness them.' Quoted in R. D. Perrin, 'When Religion becomes Deviance: Introducing Religion in Deviance and Social Problems Courses', *Teaching Sociology*, 29, 2 (2001), 135.

⁷³ Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, 14.

⁷⁴ See Hunt, 'Anxiety and Social Explanation', 516.

⁷⁵ E. J. Ingebreetsen, 'Staking the Monster: A Politics of Remonstrance', *Religion and America Journal: A Journal of Interpretation*, 8, 1 (1998), 108 – 109.

affluence of British society. For Cohen the cause of the moral panic was the ‘cultural strain and ambiguity’ of social change which manifested in the articulation of the mods and rockers as folk devils. Similarly, of their analysis of moral panics, Goode and Ben-Yehuda note that ‘in each case, the fear and concern had a social foundation, a dynamic that revealed the inner workings of the society in which it took place.’⁷⁶ Essentially, in the moral panic the processes of symbolization and convergence draw to the fore the undercurrents of social change, the shifting of moral boundaries, and the expressions of cultural insecurities which occur in the subjective arena of discourse.

This analytical stance is predicated upon the constructionist approach or, as Goode and Ben-Yehuda suggest, the more moderate position of the contextual constructionist approach. A product of the avant-garde, the ‘constructionist’, ‘relativist’, or ‘subjectivist’ position argues that social problems are the product of social definition. That is, social problems are socially constructed rather than necessarily tangible and obviously real. Contrarily, the objectivist argues that social problems are defined by the existence of a concrete, objectively presented threat or harmful condition. From the constructionist position,

A social problem is a condition which is defined by a considerable number of persons as a deviation from some social norm which they cherish. Every social problem thus consists of an *objective condition* and a *subjective definition*. The objective condition is a verifiable situation which can be checked as to the existence and magnitude (proportions) by impartial and trained observers. The subjective definition is the awareness of a certain individual that the condition is a threat to certain cherished values.⁷⁷

This is certainly an aspect of the moral panic, which sees a threat discovered (or rediscovered) and subsequently defined as a social problem. The charge of being value-laden has much to do with this position in moral panic analysis; at least insofar as it differs from the view of the moral entrepreneur whose advocacy of reform is predicated on the objectivist interpretation of social problems. However, the constructionist position enables the understanding of the folk devil as located within both the subjective *and* objective arenas, and understands that the subjective definition is not dependent or parallel to the objective

⁷⁶ Goode and Ben-Yehuda studied an assortment of moral panics from the European witch craze to drug abuse in Israel during the 1980s. Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 11.

⁷⁷ Quoted in Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies*, 1. Essentially the constructionist position asserts that the ‘objective existence of a harmful condition does not, by itself or in and of itself, constitute a social problem.’ Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 88.

condition.⁷⁸ Neither the strict constructionist nor the objectivist position is tenable for moral panic analysis because the moral panic is neither wholly objective nor wholly discursive.⁷⁹ As Goode and Ben-Yehuda argue, the strict constructionist position is untenable in moral panic analysis because it dismisses the relevance of objective data in understanding social problems. The more moderate position of the contextual construction, however, grounds the moral panic in its objective reality whilst gauging more accurately the social reaction to the folk devil.⁸⁰ The measurement of disproportion and volatility relies to some extent on this overlap between objective and subjective experience, particularly insofar as the moral panic centres on the creation of a single folk devil that symbolizes multiple threats and does not necessarily parallel its objective or verifiable existence.

Moral Panics, Context and Boundaries

The moral panic, as already noted in this chapter, is a facet of social problems – representing, perhaps, a moment when social problems intersect or converge. Such moments are particularly fruitful for historical study, offering a lens into change over time, although moral panics are complicated by the fact that they are formed by both long historical processes and discourses, and immediate concerns and changes. There is a need to place the moral panic within its broader historical context – particularly insofar as they manifest underlying concerns and urge the transition of social views to run parallel with social change. In the second edition of *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* (1980), Cohen noted that contextualization was a necessary aspect of moral panic analysis that was too easily overlooked. With retrospect Cohen stated that ‘indeed a defect of the book was the impression it sometimes might have conveyed of a certain timelessness, an unveiling of a certain set of consequences

⁷⁸ For example, child or drug abuse have very real objective dimensions and are not new problems in society, however they are not always the subjects of serious moral debate or at the forefront of public concern. Similarly, as Goode and Ben-Yehuda point out, disease may cause a great deal of objective harm in a society but does not necessarily constitute a social problem. See Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 88.

⁷⁹ This brings to the fore a further distinction between ‘strict’ or ‘hard’ constructionism and ‘moderate’ or ‘contextual’ constructionism. The former the objective reality is unnecessary and irrelevant, whilst the contextual constructionist does not and does take into account the objective condition in understanding the way in which a social problem is defined. See Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 88 – 96 and Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies*, 1 – 3.

⁸⁰ Goode and Ben-Yehuda assert that ‘If we were to focus on the conditions themselves and the threat they pose as our primary concern, we would be wandering in a theoretical wilderness, an unfocused, uncentered hodge-podge. While we do not deny the existence of the objective dimension, we do not believe that the objective seriousness of a given condition, not that alone, determines the public’s reaction to it.’ Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 96.

insulated from history and politics.⁸¹ As such, moral panic analysis offers the contemporary observer a means of evaluating current society – the changes and acceptances, the old grievances, and forgotten qualms. Certainly, the process of convergence, in which new anxieties are placed on a social patsy who seemingly imbibes all social evil, can only be understood by placing the panic in its socio-historical context.

The moral panic is a complex social phenomenon that operates on a number of levels in both the discursive and objective arenas, and this complexity is reflected either overtly or implicitly in the moral panic analysis. Garland, for example, has emphasized the need for moral panic study to operate on the levels of symbolic meaning, social relations, and historical temporality.⁸² In navigating this complex terrain – which shifts between the discursive and the objective, the seemingly timeless and the historically immediate – this thesis uses the notion of ‘boundaries’. Social, temporal, geographic boundaries pervade the moral panic, which tends to recede when moral boundaries have been redrawn, either anew or as they were, and often without a society being conscious of the slight alterations the phenomenon has left on normative contours. Echoing through moral panic analyses is their intimacy with boundary negotiation, as Goode and Ben-Yehuda explain,

[I]t is entirely likely that moral panics serve as a mechanism for simultaneously strengthening and redrawing a society’s moral boundaries – that line between morality and immorality, just where one leaves the territory of good and enters that of evil. When a society’s moral boundaries are sharp, clear and secure and the central norms and values are strongly held by nearly everyone, moral panics rarely grip its members – nor do they need to. However, when the moral boundaries are fuzzy and shifting and seem to be contested, moral panics are far more likely to seize the members of a society.⁸³

It is in the realm of the social that moral discourse proliferates, where cultural strain becomes apparent, and where the moral panic itself occurs. Most significant then are social boundaries – those values and norms that are threatened, thrown into contrast, and either strengthened or subverted through the course of a moral panic. As noted, moral panics see the drawing of discursive borders between ‘us’ and ‘them’ and permeated in the nostalgia of ‘then’ and ‘now’. As folk devils are solidified, this discourse drags into it the oldest boundaries whose

⁸¹ Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, i.

⁸² Garland asserts that ‘[t]ypically, a fully developed diagnosis explanation will operate at the levels of symbolic meaning (why this folk devil, construed as this kind of monster, with these specific connotations and associations?), social relations (why this group, with these interests, in this place?) and historical temporality (why at this moment, after these events, in this period?).’ Garland, ‘On the concept of moral panic’, 21.

⁸³ Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 52.

thresholds are better left uncrossed. The heightened concern and hostility towards the folk devil, which reflects deeper lying concerns in society, result in debate, action, and catharsis – the volatile moral panic serving to enact both social change and stability.⁸⁴ Whilst attention to social boundaries bring to the fore the dynamics of the moral panic as a phenomenon, this chapter holds that attention to temporal and geographic boundaries serves to illuminate the broader context of the moral panic whilst clarifying some its analytical difficulties.⁸⁵

Temporal boundaries draw attention to the self-reflexive nature of the moral panic, or rather the way in which temporal borders are drawn around the phenomenon when it is analysed as a ‘moral panic’. Importantly for historians, awareness of such borders draws to the fore the dislocation between the moral panic as a historically located phenomenon on the one hand and as a mode of analysis on the other. Such a dislocation, however, also presents an inevitable overlap wherein the moral panic phenomenon is invariably understood through, and shaped by, the rhetoric of analysis. Nonetheless, by denoting something as a moral panic, the period in question is demarcated as discursively and objectively anomalous from the periods before and after it. Certainly one benefit of this is that it requires the student of the moral panic to verify that the phenomenon satisfies the conditions of a ‘moral panic’, particularly insofar as measuring disproportion is concerned. However, whilst all the indicators should be present, they are not always present to the same degree and moral panics do not always share a common character. To the contrary, the degrees to which the indicators of a moral panic are present – both discursively and objectively – are determined by the *context* of the moral panic and not the moral panic *concept* itself.⁸⁶

Attention to temporal boundaries also requires that the moral panic be placed within its broader historical context. This is particularly pertinent given the fact that diachronic moral discourses and their motifs have a longer and more complex history than is immediately apparent.⁸⁷ This begs the question of what is located *within* and *beyond* the realm of the

⁸⁴ Goode and Ben-Yehuda, *Moral Panics*, 227.

⁸⁵ There is a growing concern for the historical or temporal dimension of moral panics, as well the way in which the changing cultural and media landscape have enacted on the nature of the phenomenon. See, for example, Rohloff and Wright, ‘Moral Panic and Social Theory’, 403 – 419; Hier, ‘Conceptualizing Moral Panic through a Moral Economy of Harm’, 311 – 334; Hier, ‘Thinking beyond moral panic’, 173 – 190; Garland, ‘On the concept of moral panic’, 9 – 30; Altheide, ‘Moral Panic: From sociological concept to public discourse’, 79 – 99; Stabile, ‘Conspiracy or Consensus?’, 258 – 278; McRobbie and Thornton, ‘Rethinking “Moral Panic” for Multi-mediated Social Worlds’, 559 – 574 and Ungar, ‘Moral panic versus the risk society’, 271 – 191.

⁸⁶ This is similarly stated by Garland, ‘On the concept of moral panic’, 13.

⁸⁷ See Pearson, *Hooligan* and Hier, ‘Thinking beyond moral panic’, 173 – 190.

moral panic, requiring it to be placed in the context of both older social problems and immediate social change. Analytically, bearing such a question in mind may well clarify the moments of convergence from the general currents of ideas surrounding deviance, taboo, and social vice. Certainly, in understanding the folk devil and what it symbolizes, the historian of moral panics is required to sift between those features of a folk devil that are bred out of contemporary concern and those which are imported from the stockpile of the human imagination. Essentially then, an awareness of temporal boundaries in moral panics requires a fuller understanding of both the moral panic and the historical context in which it erupts, and to which it can be compared, thereby creating a valuable lens in studying change over time.

Equally beneficial in illuminating the processes through which social boundaries are negotiated, is an attention to the geographic dimension of moral panics. Geographically moral panics are more complicated than they appear, particularly insofar as they can appear larger and more widespread than they actually are. Cohen referred to this as ‘diffusion’ in describing the tendency of the moral panic to conflate the local with the national, as relatively dispersed concerns are often presented as widespread and the subject of national (if not global) discussion. Moral panic analyses also have a tendency to gaze inwards and seldom take into account similar moral panics elsewhere, seemingly viewing the moral panic as a singular incidence rather than tracing its temporal and geographic dimensions. This has begun to change relatively recently with cognizance of moral panics as symptomatic of broader social trends and developments, rather than as single, unrelated incidents of collective behaviour.⁸⁸ Of course, whilst concrete geographic borders may define the objective arena of a moral panic, the climate of social anxiety is subject to much broader and more permeable discursive borders. Some anxieties – and the vocabulary through which they are articulated – are transported through the media, and it is important to bear in mind the three overlapping levels of local, national, and global media.⁸⁹ An attention to geographic borders brings to the fore both the actual context in which the moral panic occurs as well as the discursive landscape in which it expresses itself. Thus, as this thesis will show, moral

⁸⁸ Thompson, *Moral Panic*, 140.

⁸⁹ The changing complexity of media – both local and global – must be taken into account, as argued by McRobbie and Thornton. However, in so doing it is necessary to bear in mind the change in media practices over time, as well as the anxieties that these changes affected in themselves. Thornton and McRobbie, ‘Rethinking “Moral Panic” for Multi-mediated Social Worlds’, 559 – 574. Also see S. Cottle, ‘Mediatized rituals: beyond manufacturing consent’, *Media Culture Society*, 28, 3 (2006), 411 – 432; D. Spitulnik, ‘Anthropology and Mass Media’, *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 22, (1993), 293 – 315 and K. F. Aas, ‘Analysing a world in motion: Global flows meet “criminology of the other”’, *Theoretical Criminology*, 11, 2 (2007), 283 – 303.

panics are often national or international in character and discourse but manifest local anxieties.⁹⁰ Whilst these anxieties may import familiar tropes, successful moral panic – dependent on convergence and the presence of social anxiety – reflect local concerns. By bearing these borders in mind, the moral panic scholar is encouraged to question which anxieties are *local* and which are *localized*, as well as which anxieties are historical and which are immediate to the society in which the moral panic occurs.

Conclusions

As this chapter has shown, the ‘moral panic’ straddles both a distinct social phenomenon and the means by which it is analysed. In approaching the moral panic as a mode of study, analytical emphases impact on how the moral panic phenomenon is understood. This is particularly evident when the analysis attempts to explain the political motivations underlying the rhetoric of a moral panic. Certainly a great deal of research has placed emphasis on the *function* rather than the *content* of the phenomenon, and much energy has been poured into identifying the culprit – the instigator-come-inquisitor – who sets the moral panic in motion.⁹¹ As Hier asserts, ‘the central focus is not on the contents of particular ideological formations which find points of resonance within the wider discursive community, but rather on the “function”, “intention” or “purpose” of the discourse.’⁹² However, bearing in mind that the moral panic is a phenomenon proper opens up a broader range of possible insights into particular moments of social change. Thus, moral panic analysis offers the historian lenses into political and moral rhetoric in a society as fears and anxieties are heightened and clarified during the moral panic phenomenon itself. Such moments of collective anxiety may serve as rich and concentrated deposits for the study of change over time, particularly insofar as the language of morality interweaves the boundaries of class, gender and race with social

⁹⁰ To the geography of moral panics Jenkins paid some attention, noting that many of the elements in British moral panics were imported from America. British moral panics were, according to Jenkins, similar to American moral panics – at least superficially. Pointing to the role of ‘imitation’ in the symbolization process, Jenkins asserts: ‘American media and experts did much to form British perceptions of menaces like child abuse, serial murder, snuff films, paedophiles, and ritual abuse. In each case, the term itself was either an American importation or else was decisively influence by American usage: part of what has been called the “export-import trade in social labels”.’ Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies*, 219. This discussion of the ‘export-import trade in social labels’ originates in Hall et al, *Policing the Crisis*, 27.

⁹¹ Chas Critcher has pointed to the differences between the American and British approaches to moral panic analysis, noting that Cohen’s *Moral Panics and Folk Devils* (1972) and Hall et al’s *Policing the Crisis* (1978) form a *processual model* and sought to understand the process of the moral panic, whilst works by the likes of Goode and Ben-Yehuda in *Moral Panics: The Social Construction of Deviance* (1994) is more of an *attributional model* and concentrates on the outcomes of moral panics. See Critcher, *Moral Panics and the Media*, 9 – 30.

⁹² Hier, ‘Conceptualizing Moral Panic through a Moral Economy of Harm’, 314.

taboos, ideals and desires. While the study of moral panics has long fallen under that of collective anxiety and social problems, the ‘moral panic’ concept draws important attention to the dynamics of the phenomenon. As this chapter has argued, placing the phenomenon and concept within its broader nexus of social, temporal and geographic borders serves to clarify these dynamics.

This thesis uses this understanding of the moral panic to clarify particular moments of collective anxiety in white South Africa as exploratory of cultural change. The analytical stance of moral panic study is at times uncomfortable, but an awareness of the moral panic as both a phenomenon and a mode of analysis draws useful attention to the complexities involved in the study of public morality, collective panic and perception. As shown in this chapter, this thesis views moral panics as engendered by social change, underlying anxiety and the agency of various interest groups. Using the concept to clarify these moments of collective anxiety over the morality of white South Africans, this thesis looks at the media representations of various folk devils in mainly white South Africa from the late 1970s – a point from which cultural unity and perceptions of a single, stable white culture were increasingly challenged and eroded.

Chapter Three:

The Devil Rejoiced: Politics and Pessimism in White South Africa, 1976 – 1982

Pandora's Box

The Devil rejoiced because it was the beginning of the end for the Republic.¹

For many white South Africans the anti-apartheid struggle started in pixels. It started in the year that television made its belated arrival in South Africa and which would be, as one British journalist remarked, 'like the opening of Pandora's Box.'² It started in 1976 with the images of violence spewing from the Soweto Uprising. It started in the pictures of fists raised in protest, of streets filled with the smog of tear gas and burning cars, of fleeing schoolchildren and Hector Petersen's limp and bloodied body. It started in the year that black consciousness became black defiance and when the chimera of stability in South Africa was shattered. Whilst television would not mean 'the end of the white man in South Africa' as some conservative politicians had predicted, it did coincide with the slackening grip of white political domination in the country.³ Newly legalised television sets, now available from South African retailers and tended by the quasi-governmental South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), 'brought the world into the home.'⁴ However, it was a world that was increasingly critical of the country's apartheid system and its National Party government, particularly after the potent images of the Soweto Uprising captured the growing anger of young black South Africans. Together, political unrest and television would serve to erode the relative isolation of white South Africans, challenging both the geographic and social borders of the apartheid state and white identity.⁵

¹ Mrs Santa Nel, housewife and member of the Action Moral Standards movement quoted in 'SABC "porn" alarms moral action women', *The Natal Mercury*, 22 February 1978.

² M. Kallenbach, 'Television is the nation's Pandora's Box', *The Times* (London), 12 June 1973, 8.

³ An assertion made by Dr Albert Hertzog, the *verkrampste* leader of the Herstigte Nasionale Party in D. Van der Vat, 'Television will have profound social effects', *The Times* (London), 26 October 1970, 8.

⁴ Van der Vat, 'Television will have profound social effects', *The Times* (London), 26 October 1970, 8.

⁵ See R. Krabill, *Starring Mandela and Cosby: Media and the End(s) of Apartheid* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2010).

The tumult of the Soweto Uprising spread across the country, initiating an attack on the symbols of apartheid power whilst becoming a symbolic moment in which black resistance in South Africa was reborn. Facing harsh criticism from abroad and at home as well as economic instability, the National Party entered a period of crisis from which it never wholly recovered. Moving ever further from its ideological roots, P. W. Botha's government announced that 'apartheid is dead' as it began the process of dismantling the country's racial policy.⁶ Although such a diagnosis was premature, 1976 marked the rise of black militant nationalism and the decline of the white apartheid state. This decline brought with it a growing introspection among white South Africans: of the moral costs of apartheid policy on the one hand, and the security of white values on the other. As this chapter shows, while Botha was seen to 'sup with the devil, [and] also with the devil's disciples' in the political sphere, fear that Satan himself was undermining the morality of white South Africans was also widespread. This chapter explores the political and cultural fragmentation that occurred during the decline of apartheid and Botha's early socio-political reforms. In doing so, it traces the broad debate regarding 'liberalism' and morality during this period and how this manifested in a moral panic over Satanism between 1978 and 1982.

South Africa's 'Traumatic Years'

Coming to power in 1948, Afrikaner nationalism occupied an ideological line that became increasingly taut with time. Having advanced a white Afrikaner unity built on class solidarity and patriotic morality, Afrikaner nationalism was gradually reshaped by its economic and political successes.⁷ Within the international milieu of decolonisation and the Cold War, South Africa experienced increasing moral fracas with Western countries – nationalist fears of domination by English imperialists, the black majority and Communists driving the repressive measures of apartheid.⁸ With the birth of the Republic in 1961, the success of which the National Party had longed for, Afrikaner nationalism became increasingly fraught with internal ideological and political tensions. Certainly, as O'Meara has argued, whilst the

⁶ N. Ashford, 'No corpse yet, but apartheid could be dying', *The Times* (London), 21 December 1979, 12 and H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *New History of South Africa* (Cape Town: NB Publishers, 2007), 368.

⁷ See A. Grundlingh, "'Are We Afrikaners Getting too Rich?'" Cornucopia and Change in Afrikanerdom in the 1960s', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, 21, 2/3 (2008), 143 – 165.

⁸ See P. Vale, 'The Cold War and South Africa: Repetitions and Revisions on a Prolegomenon' in G. Baines and P. Vale, eds, *Beyond the Border War: New Perspectives on Southern Africa's Late-Cold War Conflicts* (South Africa: University of South Africa Press, 2008), 22 and R. M. Price, *The Apartheid State in Crisis: Political Transformation in South Africa 1975 – 1990* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 18.

traditional foe of British imperialism was slain by the achievement of the Republic, the ‘myth of a classless volk’ was consigned to socio-political fantasy by the extraordinary economic growth of the 1960s. In the shadow of 1961, the National Party under Hendrik Verwoerd abandoned white Afrikaner values for those of South African whites in general. However, it was only with the assassination of Verwoerd in September 1966 that the once relatively submerged discontent surfaced within the ruling party.⁹

Whilst the nationalist wariness towards the divisive power of capitalism became increasingly diluted under B. J. Vorster, his early premiership was marked by extraordinary economic growth and the suppression of anti-apartheid resistance within South Africa.¹⁰ Under Vorster, however, political grumblings became political infighting and divisions were soon demarcated between the *verkrampste* (conservative) and *verligte* (enlightened) Afrikaner nationalists.¹¹ The former were steadfastly against change and clung to the traditions of ‘anti-capitalist’, Afrikaner-first nationalism of the 1940s and 1950s. Emerging from this nationalism and its success in creating a wealthy and successful Afrikaner capitalist class, the *verligte* sought to adapt the ideology and politics of Afrikaner nationalism to a modern world.¹² The widespread *verkrampste* chagrin with Vorster’s government, which sought white votes beyond the ethnic boundary of Afrikanerdom, led to the prime minister’s furious initiatives to hold the party and its allies together.¹³ It also resulted in schism in 1969 with the founding of the Herstigte National Party (HNP), the breakaway *verkrampste* group which advocated itself as the guardian of lower class Afrikaners.¹⁴ The National Party did not welcome the opposition from within Afrikaner ranks and utilised the full power of the pro-National Party press against Albert Hertzog’s HNP in an early election. Determined not to allow Hertzog’s party any significant inroads into their electorate the National Party’s campaign was more conservative than usual, resulting in some loss of support from *verligte*

⁹ D. O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years: The apartheid state and the politics of the National Party, 1948 – 1994* (Randburg: Raven Press, 1996), 116 – 136.

¹⁰ P. E. Louw, *The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of Apartheid* (Westport: Praeger Publishers, 2004), 37; Grundlingh, “‘Are We Afrikaners Getting too Rich?’”, 143 and C. D. Dalcanton, ‘Vorster and the Politics of Confidence 1966 – 1974’, *African Affairs*, 75, 299 (1976), 163 – 181.

¹¹ The terms ‘verkramp’ and ‘verlig’ were coined by Wimpie de Klerk in 1969 in reference to the different camps within white Afrikaner politics regarding the relationship between white power and the state. See J. van Rooyen, *Hard Right: The New White Power in South Africa* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co, 1994), 17.

¹² O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 155 – 156.

¹³ O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 163.

¹⁴ C. van der Westhuizen, *White Power & the Rise and Fall of the National Party* (South Africa: Zebra Press, 2007), 88.

Afrikaners, immigrants and English-speaking constituents.¹⁵ The *verkrampste* HNP won no seats in the 1970 election, having gained just 3.5 per cent of votes. However, whilst the National Party enjoyed its victory and Vorster a favourable spotlight in the pro-government press, that the HNP had managed just less than ten per cent of Afrikaner votes signalled broader class divergences in Afrikaner ranks.¹⁶

The erosion of the homogenising forces of earlier Afrikaner nationalism intensified in the 1970s. This attrition resulted as much from the ‘successes’ of apartheid policy as from its failures. Following the country’s economic boom during the 1960s, in which economic growth crested over five per cent per annum, white poverty was eradicated.¹⁷ By the following decade eighty per cent of Afrikaners were urbanised, with sixty-five per cent employed in white-collar positions.¹⁸ However, the very successes of Afrikaner nationalism in levelling the economic playing field among white South Africans increasingly necessitated changes to apartheid labour policy. There simply were not enough whites to satisfy the thirst for skilled labour. Whilst the State was increasingly unable to prevent the urbanization of blacks in towns and cities outside of their designated ‘homelands’, the old antagonisms between English-speaking and Afrikaners diminished as ethnic boundaries were overwritten by class and capitalism.¹⁹ These changes would continue to reverberate on the shifting *verkrampste/verligte* spectrum in white South Africa. This ideological splintering, to which Vorster was forced to devote his attention in the waning years of his premiership, was aggravated by the ferment of South Africa’s ‘traumatic years’.²⁰

Historian of religion, Sydney Ahlstrom used the term ‘traumatic years’ to describe the ‘momentous and unresolved’ upheaval of culture, spirituality and politics in the 1960s counterculture.²¹ Similar tensions resounded in the crumbling of apartheid in white South Africa, although it would only witness its own politicised white youth in the late 1980s with

¹⁵ B. J. Liebenberg and S. B. Spies, eds, *South Africa in the 20th Century* (Pretoria: J. L. van Schaik Academic, 1993), 427.

¹⁶ D. Welsh and J. E. Spence, *Ending Apartheid* (Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited, 2011), 35 – 36. The HNP never garnered much support, and with the founding of the Conservative Party in 1982 the HNP’s support declined dramatically – receiving less than 0.25 per cent of votes in 1989. J. van Rooyen, *Hard Right*, 75.

¹⁷ Welsh and Spence, *Ending Apartheid*, 46.

¹⁸ Van Rooyen, *Hard Right*, 30.

¹⁹ Welsh and Spence, *Ending Apartheid*, 36.

²⁰ H. Giliomee, ‘Broedertwis: Intra-Afrikaner conflicts in the transition from apartheid 1969 – 1991’ in N. Etherington, ed, *Peace, Politics and Violence in the New South Africa* (London: Hans Zell Publishers, 1992), 169 and Welsh and Spence, *Ending Apartheid*, 34.

²¹ S. E. Ahlstrom, ‘National Trauma and Changing Religious Values’, *Daedalus*, 107, 1 (1978), 29.

the emergence of the *Voëlvry* movement. As Welsh and others have argued, ‘the internal divisions among white South Africans, especially Afrikaners, grew sharper as the pressures on apartheid mounted.’²² As such, the first section of this chapter explores the political and cultural schisms that occurred in the first death throes of apartheid and Afrikaner nationalism between 1976 and 1982. As the monolithic state machinery grew evermore clumsy in a modernizing South Africa, so the gulf between left and right, *verligte* and *verkrampte*, widened. This divergence both engendered and fed off the ambiguity of P. W. Botha’s early racial reforms between 1978 and 1982, and – as this chapter argues – spilled well beyond the political realm and into the social arena of an introspective white South Africa.

‘The bumbling politicians’:²³ The National Party in crisis, 1976 – 1978

The winter sun bore down on some twenty thousand black schoolchildren on the morning of 16 June 1976. Their march began peacefully, the children armed with placards announcing that ‘We are not the Boers!’ and ‘If we must do Afrikaans, Vorster must do Zulu!’ in reaction to the new language rule which enforced Afrikaans in black classrooms.²⁴ The police arrived, stones were thrown, shots fired, several demonstrators killed and a wave of violence spilled through the streets of Soweto within a day, across the Reef in a week, and then throughout the country. State repression was swift and police action severe, with 575 dead and 2389 wounded by the end of 1976.²⁵ Despite anxiety regarding the decolonization of African states, which left South Africa and Rhodesia the only white-ruled countries on the continent, the Soweto Uprising occurred at a time of considerable confidence in white South Africa. Anti-apartheid resistance had been suppressed in the 1960s, with what little was left of the African National Congress in exile. Meanwhile, economic prosperity greatly bolstered the confidence of its ruling elite that it had achieved a modern South Africa.²⁶

²² D. Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2009), 172 and O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years* (1996).

²³ ‘A year of chains and changes’, *Post*, 30 December 1979, 6.

²⁴ A. Jeffery, *People’s War: New Light on the Struggle for South Africa* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2009), 17.

²⁵ H. Deegan, *The Politics of the New South Africa: Apartheid and After* (England: Pearson Education Limited, 2001), 46.

²⁶ S. Ellis and T. Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist in Exile* (London: James Currey, 1992), 79.

Having largely ignored the rumblings of black consciousness and reports of discontent in Soweto, the events of 1976 appeared to take the apartheid government by surprise.²⁷ With reports of the raids, arrests, detentions and deaths in the apartheid state's attempts to quash resistance, the considerable media attention to the Soweto Uprisings unleashed a stream of international criticism towards white South Africa. Thus, whilst the government struggled to regain political stability and international condemnation grew, South Africa's economy was also in the precarious position of being dependent upon foreign investment. Bolstering the growing anti-apartheid lobby was the death of black consciousness leader Steve Biko, who died in police custody on 11 September 1977. Banning eighteen black consciousness and anti-apartheid organizations a month after Biko's death, the South African government now faced the official international rejection of its policies. The United Nations proceeded to place an arms-embargo on South Africa and demanded that anti-apartheid organizations be unbanned and detainees released, whilst US president Jimmy Carter pledged to bring about majority rule by peaceful means.²⁸

Worsening South Africa's reputation still further were the comments of its Minister of Justice, Jimmy 'the Mouth' Kruger.²⁹ Infamously callous, Kruger had justified the use of live-ammunition in the Soweto Uprisings as teaching blacks to become 'tame to the gun',³⁰ and remarked that Biko's death had 'left him cold'.³¹ Kruger soon attempted to backtrack: asserting that he had made the comment under the impression that the charismatic black consciousness leader had died from a hunger strike,³² and that Biko had been a communist.³³ However, despite such attempts, the Minister's later statements, like: 'I have met a tremendous amount of black people and also young black people involved in the rioting of 1976. They have been to my office for a cup of tea and I had discussions with them', only sounded ominous.³⁴ Essentially, the National Party government faced a public relations crisis. Vorster, meanwhile, lost his drive in the political arena. No longer the charming leader

²⁷ As Welsh has noted, the Soweto Uprising was preceded by several school strikes, a number of attacks on police in the township, as well as an attack on a black Afrikaans teacher with a screwdriver. Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 155.

²⁸ A. Jeffery, *People's War*, 19.

²⁹ O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 241.

³⁰ Quoted in J. Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 213.

³¹ Quoted in O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 193.

³² Kruger told the Natal National Party congress that Biko had died from a hunger strike. O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 193.

³³ Ellis and Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid*, 85.

³⁴ 'And, behold, the sky did not fall on their heads', *Sunday Post*, 17 June 1979, 6.

known for his ‘witty after-dinner speeches’,³⁵ a leader who ‘acted as a man ready to retire’ compounded the economic crisis and increasingly obvious stumbling of apartheid policies.³⁶

The deteriorating image of South Africa abroad and the crisis of its government were further intensified, perhaps ironically, by bungled attempts at propaganda. Backed by Vorster’s ‘heir-apparent’ Connie Mulder, the head of the Information Department, a number of secret state-funded projects were launched in an ill-fated attempt to burnish South Africa’s tarnished reputation. In addition to the attempted purchase of several leading newspapers in South Africa, Britain, France and America, such projects also included the bribery of international and local public figures and reporters who spoke positively of South Africa’s antics.³⁷ These bribes included procuring luxurious accommodation and sexual favours for these defenders of South Africa’s honour. Secret funds were also poured into convincing officials in Zaire, Senegal, the Ivory Coast, and Israel to entertain Vorster’s highly publicised visits, as well as lobbyists and foreign political candidates who were less hostile than their opposing candidates come election time.³⁸ In an attempt to neutralise the criticism levelled at the National Party government by the English-speaking press in South Africa, the Information Department illicitly funded and launched the pro-government English newspaper, *The Citizen*.³⁹ Fudging the newspaper’s circulation figures from the start, Mulder’s department also made several unsuccessful attempts to purchase an English newspaper chain through one of their front men, Louis Luyt, a successful Afrikaner businessman. In addition to public suspicion of the lavish holidays enjoyed by senior members of the Information Department, rumours of illegal projects, blackmail and even murder were endemic by the time the scandal broke in 1978.⁴⁰ With over R 80 million wasted on illegal and largely ineffective propaganda projects,⁴¹ the ‘Information Scandal’ implicated Vorster and his ‘crown-prince’ Connie Mulder just before the election. Suspicions of Mulder’s complicity were greatly encouraged by the Minister of Defence P. W. Botha, who pushed for a Commission of Inquiry into the

³⁵ Giliomee and Mbenga, *New History of South Africa*, 350.

³⁶ Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 222.

³⁷ These included attempts to pay off foreign reporters and purchase several newspapers, including *The Washington Star*, *L’Equipe* and a British journal. Liebenberg and Spies, *South Africa in the 20th Century*, 465.

³⁸ O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 214.

³⁹ Welsh and Spence, *Ending Apartheid*, 43.

⁴⁰ Liebenberg and Spies, *South Africa in the 20th Century*, 465. When the ‘Information Scandal’ broke in 1978, it was speculated that the suspicious murder of NP election candidate Dr Robert Smit and his wife in 1977 had been to prevent Smit from revealing the illegal projects of the Information Department. O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 214.

⁴¹ Welsh cites an estimated R 80 million and O’Meara over R 85 million. Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 106 and O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 214.

rumours. The Commission caught Mulder in a public lie and confirmed the Information Minister's involvement in what was soon dubbed 'Muldergate' by the press. A disgraced Mulder, having lost to Botha in a second ballot of 98 votes to 74,⁴² was forced to resign whilst Vorster chose to retire – the two soon remembered as 'the bumbling politicians' by the South African press.⁴³

'The breeze of change':⁴⁴ Botha, reform and schism, 1978 – 1982

The scandalous intrigue of Muldergate effectively accelerated both reform and the eventual rupture of Afrikaner Nationalism with the election of P. W. Botha as prime minister in September 1978.⁴⁵ By this time the apartheid state had managed to restore internal order, its economy was beginning to recover, and the international threat of sanctions had been realigned to a policy of 'constructive engagement'.⁴⁶ But the period of crisis resulting from 1976 had paralysed Vorster, accelerated intra-party tensions and made the failures of apartheid abundantly clear.⁴⁷ A National Party man from the age of twenty, now sixty-two year old Botha was perhaps a surprising source of reform.⁴⁸ An unyielding, efficient politician and thoroughgoing 'difficult man' nicknamed 'Pete Weapons' and 'Pangaman' by his own party⁴⁹ – Botha promised a 'clean, honest administration'.⁵⁰ Like his predecessor, however, it was an administration increasingly undermined by dissent from within. As Welsh argues, the ad hoc changes to apartheid policy under Vorster were 'won against the entrenched ranks of the *verkrampies*, who regarded each change, however trifling, as setting a precedent and creating cumulative momentum for further change.'⁵¹ With the *verkrampie* position firmly against adapting apartheid policy but reform urgently needed, Botha's early administration was marked by political infighting and opacity. Whilst Botha's sceptics would refer to him as the rather underwhelming 'breeze of change',⁵² one foreign newspaper would comment: 'South African policy now amounts to little more than trying to postpone on every

⁴² Barber, *South Africa in the twentieth century*, 223.

⁴³ 'A year of chains and changes', *Post*, 30 December 1979, 6.

⁴⁴ P. Mosely, 'Is the time for blacks coming?', *Post*, 30 November 1979, 5.

⁴⁵ O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 230.

⁴⁶ Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 224.

⁴⁷ O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 224.

⁴⁸ Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 208.

⁴⁹ O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 216 and 254.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 224.

⁵¹ Under Vorster some of the laws surrounding racial segregation had been relaxed, particularly where sport was concerned, as well as the approval of 'multinationalism' in certain hotels and restaurants. Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 107.

⁵² This was a satire of MacMillan's 1960 'Winds of change' speech. Mosely, 'Is the time for blacks coming?', 5.

issue the inevitable consequences of apartheid in practice.’⁵³ In the wake of the Soweto Uprising, the internal divisions within the National Party were both exacerbated and betrayed to the public. Although Botha would push reform, it came at the cost of cementing the *verkrampste* position, splitting the National Party and ‘Afrikanerdom’.⁵⁴

Broadly speaking, whilst Botha attempted to ward off international castigation, he also had to calm internal opposition and his critics. Whilst maintaining the apartheid policy of excluding black South Africans from the political arena, Botha also urged socio-economic reform as vital to the continued survival of white South Africa.⁵⁵ Whilst Botha was not a liberal, he continued the process of relaxing petty apartheid laws, which Vorster had found ‘hurtful discrimination’.⁵⁶ Political infighting between the *verligte* and *verkrampste* spilled into the congregations of the *Susterkerke* (Sister Churches) of Afrikaner Nationalism who had long provided ideological justification for apartheid policies. The churches would experience increasing tension both within their halls and in their relationship with the National Party, at first in the 1960s and increasingly after 1982. From 1979 Botha would test this relationship further in repealing laws against interracial relationships on the basis that none of the biblical authority on which such legislation was passed could be found.⁵⁷ Averting the charge of outright deviation, Botha predicated his administration of the threat of ‘total onslaught’ and the need for white South Africa to ‘adapt or die’. Certainly by the mid-1970s, the political rhetoric of its generals favoured the notion that white South Africa faced a ‘total onslaught’ that sought to conquer ‘the hearts and minds of men’.⁵⁸ As Barber has noted, this translated into the entrenched view that South Africa stood against the encroachment on the one hand and the ANC on the other, the latter of which Botha viewed as ‘the next best thing to the devil’.⁵⁹ With these strategies Botha pushed a massive overhaul of the apartheid state machinery, effectively strengthening the seat of his power and centralizing the government. Whilst Botha’s management style further alienated the *verkrampste* ranks,⁶⁰ his early reforms

⁵³ ‘Four years after Soweto’, *The Times* (London), 16 June 1980, 15.

⁵⁴ O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 196 – 197.

⁵⁵ Deegan, *The Politics of the New South Africa*, 51.

⁵⁶ Quoted in Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 221.

⁵⁷ The Mixed Marriages Act and Section 16 of the Immorality Act were repealed by 1985, just a year before the Dutch Reformed Church would distance itself from apartheid ideology. Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 215 and Van Rooyen, *Hard Right*, 87. Also see L. M. Eades, *The End of Apartheid in South Africa* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), 21. The split between the Church and State will be discussed in the next chapter.

⁵⁸ Giliomee and Mbenga, *New History of South Africa*, 367.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 225.

⁶⁰ Van Rooyen, *Hard Right*, 23.

could be justified as necessary to the survival of white society under the concept of ‘adapt or die.’⁶¹

The Soweto Uprisings had struck a resounding blow to white confidence. After a decade of silence, the Uprisings saw some three thousand politically militant youths revitalise the ANC and usher in a new phase of militant resistance.⁶² The South African government responded by seeking allies outside of the white constituency, and under the urgency of ‘adapt or die’, Botha began the process of granting political representation to Indian and Coloured South Africans. A reform aimed at reinforcing white dominance in the country, the result would be to the contrary: Afrikaner nationalism would implode, whilst the exclusion of blacks from the Tricameral Parliament of 1983 further revitalized anti-apartheid resistance.⁶³ The *verkrampste* Andries Treurnicht, nicknamed ‘Dr No’ by the press due to his stance on racial integration, became one of Botha’s strongest opponents.⁶⁴ Criticizing the adaptations of apartheid policy, and underscoring the *verkrampste* allegiance to grand apartheid, Treurnicht argued that ‘if petty apartheid is completely eliminated...big apartheid becomes stupid, superfluous and unnecessary...You can’t make apartheid big, if you kill it little by little.’⁶⁵ Botha’s reforms – ‘cosmetic’ and otherwise – exacerbated, if not verified, *verkrampste* concerns. However, it was the decision to include Indian and Coloured representation in white parliament that cleaved an irreparable rift in the National Party. In February 1982, eighteen members of the National Party followed Treurnicht out of parliament to form the Conservative Party, scoffing at Botha’s proposals of power-sharing as ‘treasonous to nationalism.’⁶⁶

Whilst signalling that the unity that had been carved out and lauded by Afrikaner nationalists for several decades had come to an end, the split also freed Botha from the battle of intra-party dissent. Botha’s government, its *verkrampste* ranks considerably diluted, was now better positioned to push labour and franchise reform. Botha’s administration was far more favourably disposed towards capitalism and the business sector than his predecessors, an alliance cemented in the Carlton (1979) and Good Hope (1981) conferences.⁶⁷ However, the

⁶¹ Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 225.

⁶² Between 1975 and 1986, the ANC in exile grew from 1000 members to 14 000. Louw, *The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of Apartheid*, 129 – 130 and J. Seekings, *The UDF: A History of the United Democratic Front in South Africa, 1983 – 1992* (United Kingdom: David Philip, 2000), 5 and Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 170.

⁶³ Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 233.

⁶⁴ N. Ashford, ‘S Africa’s rulers in bitter debate’, *The Times* (London), 23 June 1977, 10.

⁶⁵ Quoted in Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 223.

⁶⁶ Quoted in Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 234. Also see O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 308.

⁶⁷ Eades, *The End of Apartheid in South Africa*, 22 and Louw, *The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of Apartheid*, 69.

Conservative Party came to represent far greater opposition to the National Party than earlier splinter groups like the HNP, the right-wing increasing in strength since the late 1970s. Reflecting growing unease with the government's reforms, the 1981 national elections revealed growing support for the right – the HNP receiving an unprecedented 14.1 per cent of votes.⁶⁸ This support soon flowed to the Conservative Party, which subsumed smaller splinter parties like Connie Mulder's National Conservative Party and won the allegiance of cultural organisations like the South African Bureau of Racial Affairs (SABRA) from the National Party.⁶⁹

Whilst the decolonisation of African states fertilised a resurgence of the 'centuries old fear of being dominated', the fear-campaign of 'total onslaught' and growing anti-apartheid violence facilitated the growth of the right-wing. Between December 1981 and November 1982, the military wing of the ANC – Umkhonto we Sizwe – was responsible for some twenty-six sabotage attacks on South African soil.⁷⁰ In white South Africa, the growth of the right-wing was aggravated by a tumultuous economy. The average income of whites in the public sector decline twenty-three per cent between 1979 and 1981, white unemployment skyrocketed at the onset of the 1980s, increasing from 6000 to 32 000 between 1981 and 1985.⁷¹ As the decade progressed, the return of the 'poor white' problem, its former demise the success of a unified Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid policy, became a rallying cry for the likes of the Conservative Party.⁷² As Swart has argued, economic insecurities only strengthened the persuasive power of right-wing groups like the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) who 'promised a return to the sanctuary of male privilege.'⁷³ These insecurities were only stoked further by Botha, whose labour reforms allowed for greater black mobility. As Van Rooyen

⁶⁸ In contrast to 3.3 per cent in 1977. Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 228.

⁶⁹ The National Conservative Party was formed by Mulder in 1979. Receiving only 1.4 per cent of votes in the 1981 elections, it was subsumed by the Conservative Party in 1982. As Van Rooyen has shown, the founding of the Conservative Party in 1982 cut the remaining ties between the National Party and SABR, the latter of which became integral to right-wing politics in the 1980s. Van Rooyen, *Hard Right*, 74 – 79.

⁷⁰ Between 1980 and 1981, MK had attacked several high profile targets including a Sasol oil plant (June 1980), the mainline between Soweto and Johannesburg (October 1980), power stations in the Eastern Transvaal (July 1981), and a military base outside of Pretoria (August 1981). Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 229.

⁷¹ O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 309 – 310 and S. Swart, "'Man, Gun and Horse": Hard Right Afrikaner Masculine Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa', in R. Morrell, ed, *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001), 78.

⁷² Van Rooyen, *Hard Right*, 31 – 32. The 'poor white' problem emerged in the late 1920s in South Africa, and Carnegie Commission (1932) estimating that some 300 000 whites, the majority of whom were Afrikaners, were 'very poor'. The upliftment of 'poor whites' was integral to the rhetoric of Afrikaner Nationalism in the following decades. Welsh and Spence, *Ending Apartheid*, 21.

⁷³ Swart, "'Man, Gun and Horse": Hard Right Afrikaner Masculine Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa', 78.

argued, ‘many white workers saw the new labour system as a direct threat to their own economic security.’⁷⁴ Whilst white unemployment soared, black apprenticeships increased eightfold and black trade unions had been legalised following the recommendations of the Wiehahn Commission in 1979 as well as several other reports.⁷⁵ Essentially, the high drama of political schism would resound beyond its sphere to reverberate in the anxieties and insecurities of its white constituency. Like the political turn in the solidifying of *verkrampste* concerns in the growth of the right-wing in the early 1980s, cultural politics and the campaigns of moral guardians would reach new heights as the decade progressed.

The men who blame droughts on miniskirts:⁷⁶ The growth of moral pessimism in South Africa, 1973 – 1982

Plagued by infighting, scandal, incompetence and corruption, the National Party had been in crisis – publically and administratively – since 1976. The Soweto Uprisings and international castigation brought a resounding end to the white confidence born in the 1960s, the heyday of grand apartheid which now lay beyond recovery. With an overwhelming ‘sense of impending catastrophe’,⁷⁷ the militancy and subsequent repression of re-emergent anti-apartheid resistance from the mid-1970s fostered anxieties about majority rule. This shattered confidence was accompanied by a crisis of conscience in many white South Africans, and further aggravated by the political infighting and scandal of the ruling party. As one Afrikaner newspaper cried out in reaction to the Soweto Uprising, ‘We do not want blood on our language.’⁷⁸ Compounding a loss of faith in the nationalist government, and shining a spotlight on its internal division, the Muldergate scandal ‘rocked white South Africa, undermining the Afrikaners’ self-image of puritan righteousness and volk unity.’⁷⁹ Against this bruised confidence in the National Party, ‘Afrikanerdom’ and white values in general – the election of Botha inspired hope beyond the country’s black population. As one South

⁷⁴ Van Rooyen, *Hard Right*, 31.

⁷⁵ Swart, “‘Man, Gun and Horse’: Hard Right Afrikaner Masculine Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa’, 78. These reports included the Riekert Report (1979) and the De Lange Report (1981). Moreover, the narrow policies and racial insecurities of the ultra-*verkrampste* induced chagrin in the *verligte*. The vehement assertions of the AWB’s Eugene Terre Blanche that ‘we will govern ourselves with our superior white genes’, for example, were embarrassing and out-dated. Quoted in Van Rooyen, *Hard Right*, 92. As Welsh has asserted, the *verkrampste* now ‘held up a mirror to the more modern-minded Nationalist of what the NP had stood for in the not-so-distant past – and they did not like what they saw.’ Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 204.

⁷⁶ From F. Henny, ‘Like man who blamed drought on miniskirts’, *Weekend Post*, 17 May 1980, 11.

⁷⁷ P. Mosely, ‘Is the time for blacks coming?’, *Post*, 30 November 1979, 5.

⁷⁸ Quoted in Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 102.

⁷⁹ Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 223.

African daily commented, Botha ‘may yet save South Africa’s white nation from destroying itself through greed and the desire to maintain privilege at the expense of our great people’s dignity.’⁸⁰ Maintaining its creed as the white party of patriotic South Africans, Botha’s administration clearly supported big business.⁸¹ Whilst this saw him repeal the apartheid policies cumbersome to that end, the urgency of reform was shaped by the need to appease the increasingly diverse opinions of his party and constituency and by the desire to maintain white privilege. Essentially, in the twilight of the 1970s, and indeed of Verwoerdian apartheid, intra-party politicking and reform were accompanied by moral introspection in many white South Africans. Such moralising paralleled the growing contradictions within the political arena, opening a platform where a diverse range of fears were voiced – from the distaste for apartheid policies and fears of international isolation, to anxieties surrounding the long held fears of cultural-miscegenation and the deterioration of white values. This platform was hardly new but drew particular attention from the mid-1970s and even the muckraking of the Muldergate scandal, as O’Meara has argued, incurred a public reaction and moral introspection that was relatively disproportionate to the other political scandals that dotted the National Party’s history.⁸² Mirroring political schism and the growth of the right-wing, the demise of apartheid saw the concomitant rise and radicalisation of moral movements and campaigns regarding the sanctity of ‘white values’ in South Africa.

Alarmist rhetoric about social decadence and moral corruption had long silvered the tongue of political rhetoric in white South Africa, but became particularly virulent with the economic boom of the 1960s. With prosperous whites seen as becoming ‘worshippers of Mammon’, for moral guardians the trappings of wealth and prestige had become the altars upon which traditional white values and *volk* unity were sacrificed.⁸³ These fears were not entirely unfounded, as Du Pisani and Grundlingh have shown, the economic prosperity of white Afrikaners saw a gradual shift in their worldview and, like their English-speaking counterparts, white Afrikaners became increasingly materialistic in their perceptions of success.⁸⁴ It was in the vein of protecting white values that the arrival of television had been warded off, the subject having been debated in Parliament for several decades before its

⁸⁰ South African newspapers, *Post*, quoted in Ashford, ‘No corpse yet, but apartheid could be dying’, 12.

⁸¹ O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 308 and Louw, *The Rise, Fall, and Legacy of Apartheid*, 69 – 70.

⁸² O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 231.

⁸³ Grundlingh, “‘Are We Afrikaners Getting Too Rich?’”, 148.

⁸⁴ K. Du Pisani, ‘Puritanism Transformed: Afrikaner Masculinities in the Apartheid and Post Apartheid State’, in Morrell, ed, *Changing Men in Southern Africa*. 157 – 163 and Grundlingh, “‘Are We Afrikaners Getting Too Rich?’”, 143 – 165.

introduction in 1976.⁸⁵ Although South Africa had the technological and economic capabilities for television, it was an advance deemed the tool of ‘leftists and communists’ and sure to corrupt the moral integrity of South Africans.⁸⁶ Such views are captured, perhaps stereotypically, by the *verkrampte* Albert Hertzog whose arguments against ‘that evil black box’⁸⁷ drudged to the fore old phantoms of the black peril’:

It is afternoon and the Bantu house-boy is in the living room cleaning the carpet. Someone has left the television set on. The house-boy looks up at the screen, sees a chorus line of white girls in scanty costumes. Suddenly, seized by lust, he runs upstairs and rapes the madam.⁸⁸

However, as Krabill and Nixon have asserted, the National Party’s wariness towards the medium of television stemmed more from the threat it posed towards ethnic nationalism and cultural miscegenation than to morality itself.⁸⁹ Television threatened to end the relative isolation of white South Africans, as one British journalist commented, ‘people will not go out so often, and the near-Victorian, somewhat Calvinistic formality which is such a remarkable feature of white South African home life... will experience long delayed erosion.’⁹⁰ As mentioned, the eroding power of capitalism added credence to these fears, as economic growth and the rise of an educated white middle class corroding the dream of a ‘single-minded, abstemious “volk” prepared to make considerable sacrifices on behalf of a greater ideal.’⁹¹ However, fears of cultural swamping and moral wavering in lieu of modernisation would continue to hold weight as the decades progressed. The rebellious youth born of the 1960s counterculture – with its civil rights movement, student revolt, hippiedom, and rock and roll – cut a threatening figure in the eyes of cultural guardians, replacing to some extent the traditional foe of the British imperialist. Anxiety over the ‘counterculture’ – captured in the image of the disruptive and non-conformist teenager – taking root in white South Africa persisted from the 1960s but became particularly virulent in the late 1970s, as

⁸⁵ Nixon points out that television had been placed under the control of the SABC as early as 1949. B. Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood: South African Culture and the World Beyond* (London: Routledge, 1994), 45.

⁸⁶ The introduction of television was debated in the House of Assembly in 1963, for example, and rejected on these grounds. C. Merret, *A Culture of Censorship: Secrecy and Intellectual Repression in South Africa* (Claremont: David Philips Publishers, 1994), 70.

⁸⁷ Quoted in Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood*, 45.

⁸⁸ Quoted in Krabill, *Starring Mandela and Cosby*, 38 and Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood*, 52.

⁸⁹ Krabill, *Starring Mandela and Cosby*, 35 and Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood*, 46. To this end the country’s radio stations and newspapers were carefully vetted by the government and the Dutch Reformed Church. Although this isolation was not as replete as generally assumed. As Grundlingh has shown, these restrictions did not halt the inflow of rock and roll music for example. Grundlingh, “‘Are We Afrikaners Getting Too Rich?’”, 143 – 165.

⁹⁰ Van der Vat, ‘Television will have profound social effects’, *The Times* (London), 26 October 1970, 8.

⁹¹ Grundlingh, “‘Are We Afrikaners Getting Too Rich?’”, 160.

did the campaigns of strident moral movements like the Action Moral Standards group (AMS).

Taking up the cause in 1973, the AMS was a grassroots organisation which proclaimed itself a movement and boasted to have had some 800 000 members by 1982.⁹² Concerning itself with the health of South African society and ‘white values’ in particular, the AMS condemned the ‘pornography’ of pop music and fought for stricter censorship to prevent the ‘seeds of communism and other immoral ideas’ from taking root. Both the AMS and the paramilitary AWB were founded in 1973, but where the latter would threaten to infect the pools of interracial holiday resorts like Sun City with syphilis,⁹³ the Action Moral Standards fought from the local soapbox and letter columns of the press. In the 1970s, a little noticed AMS enjoyed sporadic and modest success. In 1974, for example, the AMS prevented the display of women’s underwear in shop windows, although only in the small town of Vryheid. That same year, their Ventersdorp branch, which was also the base of the AWB, caused a small media sensation when it made a bonfire of all literature it considered ‘objectionable’ and responsible for spreading communism and Satanism. The group condemned in particular the slippery slope of ‘modernisation’ and popular culture, which in the 1970s included modern bathing costumes, unisexual clothing, shorts, flip-flops, and statues of naked women.⁹⁴ Although echoing the *verkrampste* rhetoric of the 1960s, the group rebuked the idea that they were themselves *verkrampste*. They gained little sympathy with the *verligte* members of the press, however, who increasingly condemned all things they considered *verkrampste* in the political and cultural spheres.⁹⁵ Certainly, in their denial of the *verkrampste*-label the AMS implied that such a label would undermine the validity and the overall credibility of their concerns. However, such a rebuke was in vain after the group’s leader blamed a nudist colony for a drought in the region – a claim reminiscent of the schoolteacher who blamed South Africa’s losses in the rugby on the miniskirt in 1970.⁹⁶

⁹² It is unclear how large the group actually was, or whether its membership was predominantly Afrikaans or English-speaking. C. Bauer, ‘This man is watching you’, *Sunday Express*, 9 May 1982, 5.

⁹³ Van Rooyen, *Hard Right*, 92.

⁹⁴ L. Bekker, ‘And the censors behind the scenes’, *Sunday Express*, 1 January 1978, 13.

⁹⁵ Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 174.

⁹⁶ ‘Nudist deny racist charge’, *The Star*, 1 December 1979, 3; F. Henny, ‘Like man who blamed drought on miniskirts’, *Weekend Post*, 17 May 1980, 11 and Grundlingh, “‘Are We Afrikaners Getting Too Rich?’”, 153.

By the turn of the decade the AMS had gained a space in the media spotlight and, like the right-wing, became more radicalised as they grew in strength and size.⁹⁷ Under the leadership of Eddie van Zyl, who gained the epithet as ‘South Africa’s moral man’ in the press, the AMS increasingly tackled what it saw as a corrupt and debauched society. Taking their campaign ‘underground’, the AMS employed guerrilla tactics in their stringent letter writing campaigns. With little success as a group, the AMS co-ordinated each member to write a letter as an individual and thus created the perception of spontaneous public outcry.⁹⁸ This tactic affected more substantial successes for the group, including the banning of several editions of *Scope* magazine and later the Hollywood blockbuster *Mad Max Two* (1981).⁹⁹ By 1978, the group also had branches on several university campuses – Morele Aksie Tuts (MAT), for example, made headlines when a particularly graphic anti-abortion video traumatised several unsuspecting first year students during orientation.¹⁰⁰ That same year, the countrywide movement declared war against immorality – a declaration that carried with it a significant change in their view of South Africa and its leadership. In the early 1970s, for example, the AMS asserted that the international condemnation of South Africa stemmed not from its racial policies, but because it was a Christian society who recognised the Bible.¹⁰¹ Such a view was reminiscent, perhaps, of Dr Piet Meyer – the staunch opponent to the introduction of television, head of the SABC and one-time member of the Ossewa Brandwag. In 1965, Meyer adamantly suggested that Afrikaner nationalism assume custody of Western values in light of America’s negligent cultural degeneration.¹⁰² The AMS also condemned outright those writers who criticised the National Party government and apartheid, denoting them the ‘spiritual terrorists’ and ‘cancer cells’ eating away at the ‘healthy body of society’.¹⁰³ Although they remained wary of foreign influences and imported popular culture, by the end of the decade the ‘healthy body of society’ had degenerated into a ‘sick community’ who had ‘the cheek to call itself a Christian society’.¹⁰⁴ In 1980, Van Zyl declared that the AMS would stand against the ‘satanic evils that are overcoming our

⁹⁷ The term ‘radicalised’ is used here to refer to the increasingly extreme views and methods that the AMS took on.

⁹⁸ L. Bekker, ‘And the censors behind the scenes’, *Sunday Times*, 1 January 1978, 13.

⁹⁹ C. Bauer, ‘This man is watching you’, *Sunday Express*, 9 May 1982, 5.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Abortion film withdrawn after shock reaction’, *The Citizen*, 10 February 1978, 3 and ‘Aborsieprent uitstekend, se Aksie’, *Hoofstad*, 9 February 1978, 1. This formed part of a larger campaign against ‘that monstrosity called family-planning’ and co-habitation. Eddie Van Zyl, quoted in ‘Border duty stress blamed for pregnancies’ *The Star*, 1 August 1981, 2.

¹⁰¹ L. Bekker, ‘And the censors behind the scenes’, *Sunday Tribune*, 1 January 1978, 13.

¹⁰² Nixon, *Homelands, Harlem and Hollywood*, 61 – 62.

¹⁰³ ‘Moderator attacks writers’, *Evening Post*, 5 September 1978, 5; ‘Writer’s duty’, *The Argus*, 5 September 1978, 12 and ‘Ondergang begin by kunstenaars’, *Hoofstad*, 5 September 1978, 2.

¹⁰⁴ R. Northcott, ‘38 massage parlours were brothels’, *The Citizen*, 19 June 1978, 1.

country' in unveiling a two-year campaign to restore the sanctity of family-life and God in the daily lives of South Africans.¹⁰⁵ In tackling the social problems of prostitution, drug abuse and gambling, the AMS targeted massage parlours, pinball machines and most commonly the SABC for the 'degradation and destruction of the people of South Africa's morals and values.'¹⁰⁶

It reflected pessimism at the state of South Africa and condemned the modern society now bedevilled by homosexuality, prostitution, drug addiction, divorce and suicide.¹⁰⁷ By 1982, the alarmist rhetoric of the radical moral group asserted that South Africa was on the verge of total disintegration – the moral and spiritual health of white South Africans deteriorated and traumatised.¹⁰⁸ As Van Zyl stated:

We are on the brink of cataclysm because of our complacency – sitting in a land of plenty, with too much money and too much time to find things for idle hands to do... We are like a man sitting in a luxurious pool, drowning happily without even realising it.¹⁰⁹

Moral introspection, shrouded in pessimism and nostalgia, was fertilised by a climate of political and economic instability. Facing a recession, the resurgence of African nationalism and a militant anti-apartheid struggle supported in the international arena, white South Africa's government, press and cultural arenas were plagued by internal bickering. Whilst this would facilitate the growth of a radicalised right-wing in the 1980s, it also strengthened increasingly radical moral movements like the AMS which grew in strength and size between 1978 and 1982. In this same period, white South Africa experienced a moral panic over Satanism – during which the concerns and campaigns of groups like the AMS and other cultural organisations intersected, expressing a sense of foreboding, pessimism and ideological floundering in white South Africa.

¹⁰⁵ K. Abendroth, 'Morals fighter will launch SA campaign', *The Citizen*, 23 August 1980, 8 and 'Morals man here to "plug leaks in cesspool"', *The Citizen*, 18 September 1980, 10.

¹⁰⁶ Eddie Van Zyl quoted in 'They said it...', *The Star*, 27 November 1981, 30. Also see 'The Pinball Professor: Academic defends the game critics say is "gambling"', *Sunday Tribune*, 16 November 1980, 19 and C. Steyn, 'Morals man Eddie uptight about "blasphemous movie"', *Sunday Tribune*, 5 July 1981, 8.

¹⁰⁷ 'PE is S Africa's city of sin, says morals "action" man', *Evening Post*, 14 May 1980, 1; F. Henny, "'Like man who blamed drought on miniskirts', *Weekend Post*, 17 May 1980, 11; 'Friendly P. E. simmers over "sin city" claim', *Sunday Tribune*, 18 May 1980, 10 and K. Abendroth, 'Morals fighter will launch SA campaign', *The Citizen*, 23 August 1980, 8.

¹⁰⁸ 'Morals declining – report', *Pretoria News*, 23 April 1982, 7.

¹⁰⁹ 'Moral man here to "plug leaks in cesspool"', *The Citizen*, 18 September 1980, 10.

The Devil sits in the Lotus position: Nostalgia, pessimism and moral panic, 1978 – 1982

With the dust still to settle following the political scandal and resignation of an embittered Vorster, the pragmatic P. W. Botha was elected as prime minister in September 1978.¹¹⁰ However, just two weeks after the surprising election of the Cape leader known for his temper and single-minded resolve, South Africa's newspapers turned their attention to the devil and his minions. According to a leaked report undertaken by the Dutch Reformed Church, the moral fibre of white South Africa was being systematically attacked by the agents of Satan. In the shadow of the moon, white Satanists were reportedly gathering in derelict areas to worship the devil, kneeling before a black draped altar constructed by their charismatic high priest. Beneath the sign of the 'Baphomet',¹¹¹ initiates were claimed to recite mangled versions of the Lord's Prayer and lap up the blood of slaughtered cats to symbolize the rejection of Christ. Induced by drugs and alcohol, perverse sexual acts requiring male and female prostitutes were then performed in rituals to evoke Satan. Summoned by their chanting and sexual frenzy, 'the spirit which overshadows the temple' would then appear before the Satanists: Buddha, sitting serene in the lotus position.¹¹²

Soon heralded as 'the anti-Christian age',¹¹³ the press announced dramatically increasing numbers of Satanists active in South Africa. The Church estimate of 40 000 Satanists in 1978 was found too modest by observers, and was adjusted to 100 000 in 1979 and then at least 250 000 in 1982.¹¹⁴ The Church was adamant that Satanism was a very real and growing

¹¹⁰ According to O'Meara, Botha was nicknamed the 'Pangaman' (the Axe-man) by other NP officials because 'you'd never know when he was going to lash out at you.' in O'Meara, *Forty lost Years*, 216 and 254.

¹¹¹ The symbol of Baphomet, a composite of a goat's head and the pentagram, is popularly associated with the modern Church of Satan which was formed in the 1966 by Anton LaVey. See the official Church of Satan website, <http://www.churchofsatan.com/home.html>, available: 12 August 2011.

¹¹² In addition to the form of Buddha, South African newspapers reported that the devil might also appear as the Hindu figure 'Maha Laksmi' – a distorted spelling of the actual Mahalakshmi or Maha Lakshmi – the eighteen armed, coral coloured goddess commonly depicted in the lotus position.

See for example 'NGK Shock on SA Devil Worship: 40 000 in Satan cult', *Weekend Argus*, 14 October 1978, 1; L. Bekker, 'The Satanists: NGK says 40 000 worship the Devil', *Sunday Tribune*, 15 October 1978, 1 and A. Verster, 'Satanisme in SA: skok feite – Karate, joga ook betrek', *Die Vaderland*, 21 October 1978, 1.

¹¹³ C. Foster, 'Bloody rites mark Satanic rise', *Weekend Post*, 8 March 1980, 1.

¹¹⁴ See for example 'NGK Shock on SA Devil Worship: 40 000 in Satan cult', *Weekend Argus*, 14 October 1978, 1; J. Battersby, 'Matie man's brush with devil worship: "100 000 follow Satan in SA"', *Weekend Argus*, 11 October 1979, 11; C. Foster, 'Bloody rites mark Satanic rise', *Weekend Post*, 8 March 1980, 1; V. Carter-Johnson, 'Exposed - the sex orgies of Satan cults', *Sunday Times*, 16 November 1980, 23; 'Satanism in South Africa Investigated', *The Friend*, 6 March 1982, 1 and S. Robertson and C. Beltramo, 'Satan Rock, Pop music – "tool of the devil"', *Weekend Argus*, 20 November 1982, 22. The State had also made an official investigation in 1976 and continued to stand by their conclusion that Satanism was not widespread in South Africa. See 'Kerk, staat verskil oor Satanisme', *Die Burger*, 13 August 1979, 5; 'SA duivel aanbidding gespaar?', *Die Burger*, 18 August 1979, 8 and J. Bretenbach, 'Dis vet op Satan se vuur', *Rapport*, 19 August 1979, 15.

threat and that the devil's servants knew how to manipulate the weak and the naïve. Having trained for at least ten years, satanic high priests had studied the effect of music on the mind, the effect of modern art and modern dancing on the soul, and were adept at concocting addictive substances to affect the body.¹¹⁵ Presented at a general synod meeting of the Dutch Reformed Church in October 1978, the report claimed that pop and rock music from abroad was laced with 'in-depth advertising' for Satanism. Such music, it maintained, derived its beat from the sexual techniques of the Kama Sutra and was specifically designed to sexually stimulate its young listeners beyond their normal moral reasoning.¹¹⁶ The hostile castigation of popular culture was bolstered by cultural groups like the Afrikaner Christelike Vroue Vereeniging (ACVV) who decried the 'era of permissiveness' that allowed horror comics, nudity and violence to reign unattended in modern popular culture.¹¹⁷ South Africa's 'moral man' Eddie Van Zyl also joined the fray, asserting that 'if these rumours are true, then our greatest fears – that the flood of permissive materials in the form of books, films and LPs that has swept across this country is taking its toll on our youth – have been realised.'¹¹⁸ As such, the moral campaign of the AMS intersected with the moral panic surrounding this literal folk devil, particularly their condemnation of 'revolutionary and soul destroying' pop music as part of the Marxist ploy to use literature, music and drugs to sexually stimulate and therefore corrupt the Western youth.¹¹⁹

Against the backdrop of 'total onslaught' and 'adapt or die', this moral panic fomented the notion that white South Africans were particularly vulnerable to a 'moral onslaught' from beyond its cultural borders. The moral panic, and the literal folk devil of the 'satanic menace', emerged in waves of sensational news stories between 1978 and 1982. Following the discussion generated by the leaked report of the Dutch Reformed Church, particularly strident voices from the white tower of theology fuelled hostility towards the 'Satanic threat' by denying any validity to Eastern religions and damning their newfound influence among

¹¹⁵ 'NGK Shock on SA Devil Worship: 40 000 in Satan cult', *Weekend Argus*, 14 October 1978, 1; L. Bekker, 'The Satanists: NGK says 40 000 worship the Devil', *Sunday Tribune*, 15 October 1978, 1; A. Verster, 'Satanisme in SA: skok feite – Karate, joga ook betrek', *Die Vaderland*, 21 October 1978, 1; 'Studente, skoliere se optrede wek sorg', *Die Vaderland*, 17 October 1978, 3; 'Dwelmmiddels lok Satanslede', *Die Volksblad*, 21 October 1978, 5 and 'Are you rocking to the devil's beat?', *Sunday Tribune*, 22 October 1978, 110.

¹¹⁶ 'Are you rocking to the devil's beat?', *Sunday Tribune*, 22 October 1978, 10.

¹¹⁷ 'Studente, skoliere se optrede wek sorg', *Die Vaderland*, 17 October 1978, 3.

¹¹⁸ Eddie Van Zyl: 'As hiedie gerugte waar is, is one grootste vrees bewaarheid dat die vloedgolf van permissiewe material wat in die vorm van boeke, rolprente en langspeelplate die land oorspel nou sy tol onder ons jeug begin eis.' See 'Studente, skoliere se optrede wek sorg', *Die Vaderland*, 17 October 1978, 3.

¹¹⁹ S. Robertson and C. Beltramo, 'Satan Rock, Pop Music – "tool of the Devil"', *Weekend Argus*, 20 November 1982, 22.

white Afrikaners.¹²⁰ Of particular upset was the popularity of yoga and kung-fu whose origins were found to lie in Zen Buddhism,¹²¹ as well as the ‘Satanic temples’ of Hindu and Buddhist places of worship.¹²² Young South Africans were reportedly being lured to such places with the ‘promises of exotic sex and free liquor’ and were soon trapped in a nightmare of blackmail to ensure their compliance.¹²³ Taking almost immediate action, the AMS charged several groups as devil worshipping cults, including the ‘New Age’ societies like the Association of Creative Thought, The Emissaries of Divine Light, and the Friends of the Open Way.¹²⁴ Whilst the validity of these claims was debated in the press,¹²⁵ the Transvaal Congress of the National Party received a public request that all occult literature be banned from South African bookshelves.¹²⁶ In addition to the timely publication of P. J. Haasbroek’s bestseller *Die Duiwel is Los* (1978), which discussed similar social changes as the onslaught of Satanism, the moral panic was sustained by several bizarre and sensational stories in the press.¹²⁷

This included the story of a French school headmistress in, perhaps ironically, the small town of Parys. It was rumoured that ‘Mademoiselle Jeanne’ had been a prolific hunter of black cats, which she had sacrificed to Satan in midnight rituals. It was perhaps for this reason, the reports continue, that the foreboding woman had died friendless and alone in her hospital bed at the age of eighty-four.¹²⁸ Such stories came in lieu of a particularly scandalous affair surrounding the church, homosexual intimacy and a self-confessed satanic high priest, Phil Botha. In ‘an evil voodoo ceremony’ performed in a seedy Durban hotel, Botha claimed to have ‘swopped souls’ with a pregnant eighteen-year-old runaway named Madeleine. Having killed herself with poison, Botha claimed that Madeleine’s soul was now trapped within him.

¹²⁰ R. Roy, ‘Satanists using sex and liquor to lure innocents’, *Sunday Times*, 7 October 1979, 6 and J. Battersby, ‘Matie man’s brush with devil worship: “100 000 follow Satan in SA”’, *Weekend Argus*, 13 October 1979, 11.

¹²¹ L. Bekker, ‘The Satanists: NGK says 40 000 worship the Devil’, *Sunday Tribune*, 15 October 1978, 1; A. Verster, ‘Satanisme in SA: skok feite – Karate, joga ook betrek’, *Die Vaderland*, 21 October 1978, 1 and ‘Ondersoek na Kung-Fu, karate gevra’, *Die Volksblad*, 21 October 1978, 5.

¹²² J. Battersby, ‘Matie man’s brush with devil worship: “100 000 follow Satan in SA”’, *Weekend Argus*, 13 October 1979, 11.

¹²³ R. Roy, ‘Satanists using sex and liquor to lure innocents’, *Sunday Times*, 7 October 1979, 6.

¹²⁴ ‘Kwaai reaksie op “Satanisme”: Ons aanbid nie duiwels sê dié groepe’, *Die Vaderland*, 5 November 1978, 8.

¹²⁵ See, for example, ‘Hinduism the eternal way’, *Sunday Tribune*, 22 October 1978, 16; ‘God Protect us from these opinions’, *Sunday Tribune*, 28 October 1979, 11; ‘Extent of Satanic cultism questioned’, *Weekend Post*, 22 March 1980, 7 and ‘Kerk, Staat verskil oor Satanisme’, *Die Burger*, 13 August 1979, 5.

¹²⁶ ‘Occult out’, *Pretoria News*, 19 September 1979, 17; ‘Call to ban books on Satan’, *The Argus*, 19 September 1979, 21 and ‘Call to ban books on Satanism’, *The Star*, 19 September 1979, 5.

¹²⁷ P. J. Haasbroek, *Die Duiwel is Los: Die Onstaan en Aard van die Moderne Satanisme* (Pretoria: Haum, 1978).

¹²⁸ See, for example, ‘Oud-hoof jag katte vir Satan’, *Die Burger*, 24 March 1981, 12.

Igniting debate among church officials and congregations, Botha's story caused particular hostility when it became known that a confused young deacon had fallen in love with the woman in Botha.¹²⁹ Causing a month long media frenzy, the testimony of the ex-Satanist also fostered debate about homosexuality, the notion that one could be both homosexual and Christian damned in particular by the former moderator of the Dutch Reformed Church, Dr Koot Vorster.¹³⁰ The affair soon prompted the resignation of Vorster, who asserted 'I am fed up with [the Church's] ignorance of spiritual matters.'¹³¹

Stories of 'blood-swigging' Satanists luring innocents with sex and liquor continued in the media, as did claims that the problem was only worsening, the synod of the Dutch Reformed Church reporting: 'We've not been able to collect any specific evidence of their practices but these people are on the increase in the country as a whole'.¹³² Despite reminders of official police investigations into Satanism in 1976 and such confessions that no actual proof of satanic activity had yet been found, claims that Satanism was a festering problem in South Africa continued unabated.¹³³ As one reverend worried that 'the stage is being prepared for the appearance of the Anti-Christ whoever he may be'.¹³⁴ Cities and towns throughout South Africa were 'riddled' with satanic cells, including Stellenbosch University the 'seat of Afrikaner learning'.¹³⁵ The sudden thriving of devil worship was deemed to stem partly from the hubris of the Afrikaner *volk*,¹³⁶ and because Satanism was 'big-money'.¹³⁷ In early 1982, papers announced that an official police investigation had been launched into the Satanic threat in South Africa, now thought to involve at least 250 000 white South Africans from 'all walks of society – academics, business executives and politicians.'¹³⁸ By this point Satanists had become completely reprehensible, having been accused of stealing the small corpses of

¹²⁹ E. Botha, 'Dominee en die "Satansman"', *Rapport*, 4 March 1979, 1; 'Twis tussen leraars oor satanisme', *Oggenblad*, 25 May 1979, 3; A. Botha, 'Kerk gons oor "dooie" se siel', *Die Transvaler*, 25 May 1979, 2; 'NGK warned to beware of Satanists', *Weekend Argus*, 26 May 1979, 9; T. Spencer-Smith, 'Former Satan high priest swapped souls', *Sunday Tribune*, 27 May 1979, 3; B. Van Delft, 'Deacon and ex-satanist', *Sunday Times*, 27 May 1979, 10 and 'Transmigrasie deur Skrif uitgesluit', *Die Burger*, 31 May 1979, 6.

¹³⁰ Known in the press as Dr Koot Vorster, actually Dr J. D. Vorster. 'Dr. Koot Vorster: SA Kerk is voor groot toetstyd', *Die Burger*, 17 October 1979, 8.

¹³¹ C. Stern, 'Love between soulmates just too much for Dr Koot', *Sunday Express*, 3 June 1979, 9.

¹³² V. Carter-Johnson, 'Exposed – the sex orgies of Satan cults', *Sunday Times*, 16 November 1980, 23.

¹³³ 'Extent of Satanic cultism questioned', *Weekend Post*, 22 March 1980, 7 and 'Kerk, Staat verskil oor Satanisme', *Die Burger*, 13 August 1979, 5.

¹³⁴ C. Foster, 'Bloody rites mark Satanic Rise', *Weekend Post*, 8 March 1980, 1.

¹³⁵ V. Carter-Johnson, 'Exposed – the sex orgies of Satan cults', *Sunday Times*, 16 November 1980, 23.

¹³⁶ A. van Zyl, 'Satanisme broei vrugbaar in S.A.', *Die Volksblad*, 8 December 1980, 10.

¹³⁷ V. Carter-Johnson, 'Exposed – the sex orgies of Satan cults', *Sunday Times*, 16 November 1980, 23.

¹³⁸ J. Gagiano, 'Satanist cults in city investigated', *Pretoria News*, 5 March 1982, 1. Also see 'Satanism in South Africa investigated', *The Friend*, 6 March 1982, 1 and 'Kommissie wil okkulte nou ondersoek', *Die Kerkbode*, 14 April 1982, 1.

babies from mortuaries,¹³⁹ large-scale drug-trafficking and pornography,¹⁴⁰ as well as corrupting ‘innocent young girls’ on a regular basis.¹⁴¹ In addition to their resolution to ‘destroy the religion of the Afrikaner volk’,¹⁴² Satanists were punishing good white South Africans. Indeed, 1981 was the year of divorce and 1982 the year of heart attacks.¹⁴³

The moral panic came to a rather crashing halt in May 1982 after a Paarl clergyman was publically castigated for repeating the rumour that members of the National Party might be working for Satan. A recording of the sermon was scrutinised amidst a storm of resentment towards the idea that cabinet ministers of the ruling party were Satanists,¹⁴⁴ despite the earlier allegations in the press that ‘household names’ were working for the Devil and that many South Africans ‘had sold their souls to the devil’.¹⁴⁵ Claiming that he had been misinterpreted, the reverend asserted that whilst he did not believe such rumours, he did see them as a threat to the government and that ‘when our own people start spreading stories such as this, then it is time to take stock.’¹⁴⁶ Although his defenders noted that the entire situation had been ‘blown out of proportion’, the reverend of the Dutch Reformed Church was forced to make an official apology to calm the storm of protest that had erupted throughout the country in reaction to the comment.

South Africa’s ‘Grave New World’

Whilst the AMS continued to fight the devil, both literal and figurative, in their crusade against pop music, that ‘sensational glorification of the flesh’, the moral panic over Satanism had petered out by mid-1982.¹⁴⁷ Where centred on the threat of ‘foreign’ influences and the ‘contagions’ of the 1960s counterculture, the moral panic attempted to locate popular culture in the realm of *volksvreemd* (literally ‘foreign to the people’). The literal folk devil or, in this

¹³⁹ ‘The world is facing devil of a threat, warns pastor’, *The Daily News*, 10 March 1982, 9.

¹⁴⁰ N. Weitzs, ‘Satanist drug cult terrorizes mother and children: A bizarre tale of torture, cemetery sex and pornography’, *Sunday Express*, 2 March 1982, 3.

¹⁴¹ R. Roy, ‘Satanists using sex and liquor to lure innocents’, *Sunday Times*, 7 October 1979, 6.

¹⁴² N. Weitzs, ‘Satanist drug cult terrorizes mother and children: A bizarre tale of torture, cemetery sex and pornography’, *Sunday Express*, 2 March 1982, 3.

¹⁴³ J. Gagiano, ‘Satanist cults in city investigated’, *Pretoria News*, 5 March 1982, 1 and G. Eddey, ‘Another church officer gets a death threat from Satanists’, *Sunday Express*, 14 March 1982, 5.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Wye opslae oor Satan en minister’, *Die Volksblad*, 6 May 1982, 1; ‘Satanism statement clarified’, *The Cape Times*, 8 May 1982, 2; S. Albrecht, ‘Predikant maan oor minister’, *Die Vaderland*, 10 May 1982, 3 and ‘Predikant vra om verskoning oor satanskimp’, *Die Transvaler*, 10 May 1982, 4. Also see Chapter Five.

¹⁴⁵ ‘Satanism still exists in SA – journal’, *The Argus*, 27 September 1979, 18.

¹⁴⁶ ‘Satanism statement clarified’, *The Cape Times*, 8 May 1982, 2.

¹⁴⁷ S. Robertson and C. Beltramo, ‘Satan Rock, Pop Music – “Tool of the Devil”’, *Weekend Argus*, 20 November 1982, 20.

case, *volk* devil amplified fears that the counterculture might erupt in South Africa. Emerging from the ‘sense of impending catastrophe’¹⁴⁸ that white society was on ‘the brink of cataclysm’,¹⁴⁹ the moral panic voiced fears for the future of South Africa as well as a nostalgia for a time of moral certainty and safety. Anxieties regarding the upheaval of the 1960s counterculture were not new, and certainly the import of its products had caused considerable foreboding among conservative South Africans. Along with Elvis Presley and the Beatles in the 1960s, Satanism was another seed planted by the ‘decadent West’.¹⁵⁰ Certainly the infamous American Anton LaVey, who founded the Church of Satan, had claimed that the sexual freedom and death of God in the 1960s had ushered in the ‘Satanic Age’.¹⁵¹ Whilst the moral panic, 1978 – 1982, opened a space for concerns regarding the influence of Eastern religions and reflected their growth in white society, such fears had relatively little effect in prohibiting these activities.¹⁵² Whilst some church congregations chose to ban yoga and karate, these activities inevitably became entrenched as favourite pastimes as the decade progressed.¹⁵³ Rather the moral panic subsumed the hippie-menace and devil-worshipper in voicing fears over control, morality and dissent from within. Arguably, that these concerns were particularly amplified between 1978 and 1982 conveys the general anxieties regarding the power of white South Africans over their own future as well as a sense of persecution and punishment against a backdrop of ‘total onslaught’ and worsening economic recession.

Occurring in the heyday of Botha’s ‘total onslaught’ rhetoric, the moral panic engendered the phantom of total ‘moral onslaught’. Certainly this created a situation in which the Dutch Reformed Church, increasingly conflicted in its ties to the National Party and apartheid, could reassert its dominance on moral issues. It also opened a space for radicalising movements like the AMS to bolster their crusade against all deviant popular culture, or rather all things ‘countercultural’. Arguably, such rhetoric revealed the growing contradictions of Afrikaner nationalism as both coveting their role as guardians of the West in Africa, but

¹⁴⁸ P. Mosely, ‘Is the time for blacks coming?’, *Post*, 30 November 1979, 5.

¹⁴⁹ Eddie Van Zyl quoted in ‘Moral man here to “plug leaks in cesspool”’, *The Citizen*, 18 September 1980, 10.

¹⁵⁰ Grundlingh, “‘Are We Afrikaners Getting Too Rich?’”, 155.

¹⁵¹ Noted in S. J. Prins, ‘Satanisme en die Vrou’ in W. H. Swart, ed, *Satanisme: ’n Reeks referate gehou tydens landswye simposium oor Satanisme, 27 – 28 Mei, 1977* (Cape Town: Haum, 1977), 57. Satanism had been a concern of the Dutch Reformed Church since 1974, and had long received public attention. However, this differed from the sensational and rumour-driven reports of 1978 – 1982.

¹⁵² Also see Du Pisani, ‘Puritanism Transformed’, 157 – 163 and Krabill, *Staring Mandela and Cosby*, 53 – 64.

¹⁵³ “‘Satanic’ yoga classes come under attack’, *The Star*, 5 December 1981, 5.

rebuking modern Western culture as increasingly immoral.¹⁵⁴ The moral panic did not escape the notice of the National Party or Botha, the latter of who joined the fray in a timely moment of intra-party politicking. In August 1981, the prime minister officially condemned the ‘white devils’ in the country in reaffirming the promise of his government to protect South Africa. ‘In the name of Christianity and freedom’, Botha stated, ‘Satan walks around in the guise of whites to seduce other population groups and idealistic youth groups to devil’s work.’ In declaring the National Party against such devilry, Botha conflated and decried communism, radicalism and liberalism in asserting that the Afrikaner nationalist government was the only feasible choice in protecting family life and a constitution of multiculturalism in South Africa. Essentially, in Botha’s view the satanic threat lay in the ‘desire of saboteurs’ to undermine his administration and the reform that was so urgently needed.¹⁵⁵

Although it castigated a broad range of cultural phenomena from pop music and yoga, to drug abuse and modern art, the moral panic effected no change in the realm of public policy or even public opinion. Converged into the threatening phantom of the power-hungry communist, drug-taking, cat-killing, blood-swigging, hippie – the folk devil of the Satanist was portrayed as hostile to the Republic and determined to destroy the Afrikaner *volk* in particular. As such, although the moral panic had little lasting effect on public policy or public sentiment, it did serve to funnel anxieties regarding political reform and cultural change in white South Africa. Tellingly, the moral panic occurred in the first four years of Botha’s administration – a social and political milieu characterised by infighting, hubris and the alarmist rhetoric of ‘total onslaught’. Moreover, the panic came to an end in 1982, following the split of Afrikaner nationalism and the rallying of public sentiment *against* the notion that members of the National Party cabinet were satanic. The expulsion of the verkrampte Treurnichtites from the ruling party and the subsequent formation of the Conservative Party was a certainly a traumatic sundering of Afrikaner national unity. Arguably, however, this split also alleviated some of the anxiety that marked the early years of Botha’s administration and which expressed itself in the moral panic over Satanism between 1978 and 1982. Whilst the support base of the right-wing had grown considerably in the late 1970s, the formation of the Conservative Party – which sought the support of the entire white right – provided a far more cohesive and politically adept voice for conservative

¹⁵⁴ See M. Popescu, ‘Mirrorings: Communism, Capitalists and Voortrekkers of the Cold War’ in Baines and Vale, eds, *Beyond the Border War*, 50.

¹⁵⁵ “‘Wit Satan verlei jeug tot duiwelswerk’”, *Die Burger*, 4 August 1981, 6.

white South Africans. As such, the moral panic can be seen as manifesting the ideological backlash and uncertainty of a particular historical moment in South Africa wherein the divide between *verkrampste* and *verligte*, right and left, reactionary and reformer, widened and solidified.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the cultural and political fissures that occurred along the fault lines of the fracturing homogeneity of social norms at a key moment under apartheid. Catalysed by the Soweto Uprisings of 1976, anti-apartheid resistance within and beyond the geographic and racial borders of white South Africa intensified during the 1980s. As the United Democratic Front and the ANC launched the ‘people’s war’, the white right wing also grew in strength and size – with the Conservative Party leading the opposition against the National Party by the end of the decade. Whilst moral crusades and *verkrampste* rebukes of youth culture erupted sporadically during the decade, the moral panic buttressed by white moral introspection, as well as economic and social anxiety, had a limited shelf life. Indeed, interest groups like the Action Moral Standards – who had enjoyed the public spotlight because their concerns matched those of the moral panic – faded away with the satanic panic outlined in this chapter. However, the discursive space opened by this satanic panic allowed for more than declarations against immorality. Subsuming a variety of fears under a single folk devil, the moral panic also enabled the expression of feelings of persecution, pessimism and cultural stagnation in white South Africa.

The folk devil, or rather *volk* devil, also expressed intertwined fears that persisted throughout the decade and re-emerged in 1989. Concern over the (belated) arrival of the ‘counterculture’ in white South Africa reflected deeper concerns about the power of cultural unity and tradition, as well as generational power. A politicised white youth emerged in the late 1980s in the form of the Voelvry movement.¹⁵⁶ Arguably, however, the fears over the arrival of this ‘counterculture’ during the moral panic explored in this chapter, point to gradual changes in youth culture in modern white South Africa. Submerged within the broader movements of a politicised youth, sexual liberation and civil rights, the 1960s Cultural Revolution saw the

¹⁵⁶ P. Hopkins, *Voelvry: The movement that rocked South Africa* (Cape Town: Zebra Press, 2006) and A. Grundlingh, “‘Rocking the Boat’ in South Africa? Voelvry Music and Afrikaans and Anti-Apartheid Social Protest in the 1980s”, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 37, 3 (2004), 483 – 514.

emergence of a youth consciousness that became embedded in both the social fabric and cultural products of the global West. Contraception and the miniskirt, the rebellion of rock music, spiritual questing and the growth of new religious movements – the ‘Traumatic Era’ entrenched a youth culture that sought to counter that of their elders. Although in many ways the ‘personal’ only became ‘political’ with the satirical songs of the Voëlvry movement in the late 1980s, countercultural changes had been seeping into a modern South Africa long before. As white South Africa succeeded in creating a modern and Western society in Africa, fears over the counterculture in the moral panic explored in this chapter, responded to a growing generational divide as ‘Afrikanerdom’ and, indeed, the very idea of white supremacy began to fragment. As the 1980s progressed, the Dutch Reformed Church increasingly questioned its loyalty to the National Party and its role in apartheid, whilst charismatic Christianity flourished. Meanwhile, inspired by the reports of satanic activity between 1978 and 1982, a Port Elizabeth based police officer took up the hunt for Satan in his spare time.¹⁵⁷ This hobby bore fruit a decade later when South Africa – mired in transition to democracy and the fall of the National Party – experienced another moral panic over Satanism that saw the creation of an ‘elite’ occult task force dedicated to the war against Satan.

¹⁵⁷ During the satanic moral panic between 1989 and 1993, discussed in Chapter Five, several ‘Satan hunters’ emerged and claimed to have spent the 1980s pursuing the occult in South Africa, they do not appear to have had contact with each other. Of these, Kobus Jonker was the most well-known and published, and became South Africa’s leading ‘cult cop’ and head of the Occult Crimes Unit formed in 1992. Kobus Jonker, Interview by author. Digital Recording. Pretoria, 26 August 2010.

Chapter Four:

The Devil's Decade:

Satanism and the Trans-nationalism of a Scare, c. 1983 – 1990

The lion, the witch and the lawyer

‘You must come. There is a man roaring like a lion.’¹

In September 1985, a werewolf was shot and wounded in Bloemfontein. Having lurched through the night time streets with his arms outstretched, the ‘werewolf’ of Bloemfontein roared ‘like a lion’ and howled ‘like a banshee’.² Terrified suburbanites ‘huddled in fear’ until the fearsome creature was shot twice in the leg and collapsed under a streetlamp – his ‘bloodcurdling’ cries of ‘God take me, God take me’ reduced to piteous moaning.³ Hemmed in by a crowd of alarmed residents and police officers, the ‘werewolf’ was soon identified as a local teenage boy. According to competing eyewitness reports, the confused teenager ‘growled like an animal’ or mewled for help.⁴ By all accounts, however, the situation was otherworldly. As one bystander remarked, ‘[t]he child was on something. But it was not drugs or alcohol, the effect wore off too quickly. And he spoke normally.’⁵ The shooting was quickly linked to a local attorney whom rumour suspected of being a satanic high priest and ensnarer of children. According to rumour, the crazed boy had collapsed suspiciously close to the attorney’s house, upon which the attorney had rushed to the injured boy’s aid and touched him on the forehead. This was an act deemed all the more sinister by his ordering the police to ‘Put him down. Put him down.’⁶ It was soon reported that the boy had attended a party at the satanic attorney’s house on the night of his flight from sanity, as had another local teenager involved in a ‘Satanic-like shooting’ earlier that year. It was claimed that beneath the full moon, a ‘red haired, freckle-faced’ teenager had dressed as a witch in black robes and

¹ An alarmed Bloemfontein resident to the police, quoted in C. Hurry, ‘Bloem: it’s a devil of a town’, *The Sunday Star*, 8 September 1985, 1 and N. Du Preez, ‘Bloedstollende gille en skrikenag’, *Die Volksblad*, 8 September 1985, 1.

² C. Hurry, ‘Bloem: it’s a devil of a town’, *The Sunday Star*, 8 September 1985, 1.

³ C. Hurry, ‘Bloem: it’s a devil of a town’, *The Sunday Star*, 8 September 1985, 1 and N. Du Preez, ‘Bloedstollende gille en skrikenag’, *Die Volksblad*, 8 September 1985, 1.

⁴ C. Steyn, ‘Leading attorney seen at the scene of Satanic shooting’, *The Star*, 7 September 1985, 1; C. Hurry, ‘Devil of a row shocks sleepy Bloem’, *The Sunday Star*, 8 September 1985, 1 and C. Steyn, ‘“Satanist cult” shooting: police open docket’, *The Star*, 10 September 1985, 1.

⁵ C. Steyn, ‘Leading attorney seen at the scene of Satanic shooting’, *The Star*, 7 September 1985, 1.

⁶ C. Steyn, ‘Leading attorney seen at the scene of Satanic shooting’, *The Star*, 7 September 1985, 1.

long red-lacquered artificial nails when she shot and wounded her sleeping family.⁷ Such was the initial story of the lion, the witch and the lawyer: two local teenagers beset by madness, one feral the other bewitched, and the mysterious older resident who may have influenced them both.

Amid calls to find those ‘cunning adults’ who use children as ‘an instrument of the Devil’,⁸ police investigations revealed the events to be a lot less sinister than first speculated. The boy who wailed ‘like a banshee’ as if possessed was, police confirmed, simply intoxicated and grief stricken – his girlfriend having been killed just two weeks before. Whilst the teenage ‘witch’ had indeed suffered a bout of apparent madness, it was due to a severe epileptic fit rather than the hand of Satan. Moreover, the teenager’s purported satanic inclinations and witches’ apparel proved to be entirely the creation of rumour – her ‘witch costume’ amounting to a red t-shirt and pair of black trousers.⁹ The mysterious lawyer was never named nor charged. Indeed, the character of the ‘Satanic attorney’ disappeared altogether from later versions of the events.

Whilst the tenacity of rumour and speculation reveals that there was general apprehension regarding Satanism and ‘satanic scandal’ in the sleepy Free State capital, the story of the lion, the witch and the lawyer did *not* develop into a widespread panic, moral or otherwise. Rather, it is illustrative of the manner in which the public and press participate in the process of myth-making, the ease with which rumour is spread and events distorted, and the ability of sensationalism to open spaces in the media for further speculation. Police officials refuted the notion that ‘satanic scandals’ were occurring in the city and that the so-called ‘Satanic shootings’ were linked to the occult.¹⁰ Similarly, enquiries into possible satanic activity in local schools revealed that they ‘were not the breeding place for Satanism.’¹¹ However, press

⁷ C. Hurry, ‘Bloem: it’s a devil of a town’, *The Sunday Star*, 8 September 1985, 1. Also see N. Du Preez and M. van Rooyen, ‘Satanisme: Meisie wond ma en broer’, *Die Volksblad*, 5 September 1985, 1; ‘Satanisme onder OVS-jeug bekyk’, *Die Vaderland*, 6 September 1985, 1; ‘Satanisme onder leerlinge ondersoek’, *Die Burger*, 8 September 1985, 1 and N. Du Preez, ‘Bloedstollende gillen en skrikenag’, *Die Volksblad*, 8 September 1985, 1.

⁸ C. Steyn, ‘Churchman probes Satanism’, *The Star*, 11 September 1985, 4. Also see C. Steyn, ‘“Satanist cult” shooting: police open docket’, *The Star*, 10 September 1985, 1 and C. Steyn, ‘Leading attorney seen at scene of Satanic shooting’, *The Star*, 7 September 1985, 1.

⁹ C. Hurry, ‘Bloem: it’s a devil of a town’, *The Sunday Star*, 8 September 1985, 1.

¹⁰ See C. Steyn, ‘Leading attorney seen at scene of Satanic shooting’, *The Star*, 7 September 1985, 1.

¹¹ ‘Satanisme onder OVS-jeug bekyk’, *Die Vaderland*, 6 September 1985, 1 and ‘Satanisme onder leerlinge ondersoek’, *Die Burger*, 8 September 1985, 1. Also see ‘Ondersoek deur kerkleiers na Satanisme lewer niks’, *Beeld*, 9 September 1985, 2; E. Buro, ‘NG Kerk ondersoek Satanisme’, *Die Vaderland*, 11 October 1985, 2; C. Steyn, ‘Churchman probes “Satanism”’, *The Star*, 11 September 1985, 4 and ‘Satanisme’, *Die Volksblad*, 14 September 1985, 12.

investigations continued to maintain otherwise. Echoing several elements of the satanic panic of the late 1970s, ‘Pepe’ – a local marijuana dealer and self-confessed ex-Satanist – obliged the press with information on cult activity in Bloemfontein. Claiming to have been lured into a satanic cult by a beautiful client who was also a witch, ‘Pepe’ asserted that the gang of satanic youths met in abandoned warehouses and parking garages. Before settling down to watch pornography and initiate an orgy of their own, they would drink the blood of slaughtered cats and listen to rock and roll music. The ex-Satanist alleged that on one such occasion, his beautiful recruiter had lopped off her pet cat’s head, showered the group in its blood, and kept the dead animal’s paws to sell to black ‘witchdoctors’ as ‘muti’. He and his gang of corrupted youths did this, the ex-Satanist confessed, ‘because it felt *lekker*. It felt good.’¹²

The decade of the 1980s had seen a number of satanic related debates ranging from the ‘bob’ hairstyle, vegetarianism and reggae music¹³ to the condemnation of certain university student magazines as advocating homosexuality, communism and Satanism.¹⁴ Maintaining a general apprehension about satanic influences in youth culture, the mid-1980s saw worried clergymen and moral entrepreneurs increasingly fixate on the image of a corrupted youth enjoying wicked parties that involved alcohol, drugs and rock and roll music laced with homosexuality, ‘eastern mysticism and Satanism’.¹⁵ Against resurgent anxiety that the white youth were susceptible to the countercultural devils of sex, drugs and rock and roll, the gaze of public morality fell on sites of youth leisure and learning. White high schools, university campuses and army camps, where South African males fulfilled their mandatory military service, were increasingly perceived as vulnerable to corrupting satanic influences. Whilst these fears were at the forefront of moral crusades which sought to protect children from certain influences, such as campaigns for stricter censorship, apprehension regarding

¹² C. Hurry, ‘Devil of a row shocks sleepy Bloem’, *The Sunday Star*, 8 September 1985, 1.

¹³ See, for example, B. Taylor, ‘Skoolmeisies dra “Satanisvlegsels”’, *Beeld*, 14 May 1984, 3 and ““Satanisvlegsels” in OVS verbod”, *Die Volksblad*, 14 May 1984, 1.

¹⁴ See E. Wessels, ‘Get thee behind us, Satan!’, *Sunday Times*, 10 March 1985, 9. Also see S. Bothma, ‘Satanism row over Potch rag magazine is settled’, *The Citizen*, 7 March 1985, 19; “Foto’s in joolblad steun Satanisme”, *Beeld*, 8 March 1985, 3 and J. Coetzee, ‘Bladverkope goed na klagtes oor Satanisme’, *Die Vaderland*, 8 March 1985, 4.

¹⁵ F. Esterhuysen, ‘Beware the “satanistic” pop music, NGK synod told’, *The Argus*, 17 October 1986, 1 and ‘Satanic music’, *The South African Observer*, May 1985, 12. Also see ‘Pop-musiek se invloed “destrukties”’, *Die Volksblad*, 21 August 1986, 2; ‘Pop musiek “soms met Satanisme deurspek”’, *Die Burger*, 18 October 1986, 4; ‘Church worried about Satan-worship’, *The Star*, 17 October 1986, 11; B. Stuart, ‘Synod slams exponents of “Satanistic music”’, *The Citizen*, 17 October 1986, 11; ‘n Oop graf onder ‘n volmaan...’, *Rapport*, 19 January 1986, 2 and ‘No Satanism in cemetery party, says UPE’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 12 March 1986, 3.

Satanism did not develop into a fully-fledged panic until 1989. By this point, attention was focused almost entirely on the youth and sensationalist claims centred on grotesque rituals of cannibalism, bestiality and coprophagia.¹⁶ Thus, increasingly restricted to South Africa's white youth, the 1980s saw a gradual shift in the nature of fears surrounding Satanism in the country. With this narrowing focus, the fear-narrative of Satanism – its deviant activities and associations – became more violent and macabre. This chapter argues that this shift in focus and narrative, subtle though it was, was catalysed by both local and global trends. A decade already fraught with successive States of Emergency and the anti-apartheid struggle, the latter half of the 1980s also saw the emergence of a countercultural white youth under the banner of the Voëlvry movement. At the same time that South Africa moved haltingly towards democracy, the global West witnessed a modern 'witch hunt' to root out satanic paedophiles. In the 1980s and early 1990s, millions of people across North America, Europe and Australia became convinced that clandestine satanic cults were preying on children to torture, rape, dismember and consume in grotesque rituals to Satan.¹⁷ South Africa endured its own moral panic over Satanism between 1989 and 1993, but while it would imitate many of the elements of the satanic panics beyond its border, the moral panic in South Africa different in many respects. Essentially, these global fears would become localized, reflecting the anxieties of many white South Africans during the country's transition to democracy. This chapter looks at the infamous satanic ritual abuse scares that originated in the United States in the early 1980s, the shift in the nature of fears surrounding Satanism during this scare, and its spread across the global West. In so doing, this chapter establishes the context in which South Africa would endure its own vicious satanic panic by exploring the international Satanism scare that made the 1980s the devil's decade.

The Nightmare Nurseries: The Satanic Ritual Abuse Scare in America, c. 1983 – 1990

'Those people aren't people...People who do things like that are monsters.'¹⁸

The decade of the 1980s saw satanic panics occur across the global West. Half-truths, rumour, and fantasy fuelled garish reports that devil worshipping hordes of lecherous, vile

¹⁶ 'Coprophagia' refers to the consumption of faeces, and 'coprophilia' when this forms part of a sexual fetish.

¹⁷ P. Stevens, 'The Demonology of Satanism: An Anthropological View' in J. T. Richardson, J. Best and D. G. Bromley, eds, *The Satanism Scare* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1991), 21.

¹⁸ Michelle, a 'satanic ritual abuse survivor', in *Michelle Remembers* (1980). Quoted in J. Hunter, 'Interpreting the Satanic Legend', *Journal of Religion and Health*, 37, 3 (1998), 251.

creatures with a taste for infant flesh and a lust for prepubescent children had infiltrated every level of society. In allegations reminiscent of the European witch hunts of the sixteenth century, Satanists were said to rape and torture their young victims, force them to drink blood and urine, eat faeces and partake in feasts of dismembered and boiled infants, foetuses and animals sacrificed in unholy rituals. In countries across the global West, the decade was privy to allegations of lust, torture and murder on an unprecedented scale by a secret organization of Satanists.

Emerging in a climate of escalating concern over the safety of children and sexual abuse,¹⁹ investigations into bizarre claims of ‘satanic’ sexual abuse first emerged in the United States in 1983.²⁰ Over the decade allegations of obscene sexual abuse in day-care centres, neighbourhoods and small towns exploded across the United States and its borders. At its epicentre lay the small, family-run McMartin preschool in Manhattan Beach, California. Judy Johnson levelled the first accusations against McMartin in 1983. The mentally unstable mother of a two-year-old pupil, Johnson claimed that her child had been stabbed with scissors and staples, sodomized with an air tube, forced to sup on the blood of a murdered baby, ride naked on a horse and stick his finger into the anus of a goat. Johnson was adamant that these acts had been perpetrated by Raymond Buckey, the only male employee at McMartin and grandson of its founder, as well as cloaked figures that followed her home at night and the male models in advertisements.²¹ Whilst Johnson would later be diagnosed and hospitalized with schizophrenia, by mid-1984 scores of similar allegations were brought against the school after worried parents, psychologists and police questioned the McMartin pre-schoolers. With bizarre stories of animal sacrifice, church-like rituals and graveyard corpses, McMartin was quickly dubbed the ‘Nightmare Nursery’ by the press.²² Outraged and panicked McMartin parents began using the appellation of ‘satanic’ sexual abuse, whilst others saw the problem as extending well beyond the devilish pre-school’s walls. One such parent was sure that some twelve hundred children had been sexually molested in Manhattan

¹⁹ M. DeYoung, ‘Two Decades After McMartin: A Follow-up of 22 Convicted Day Care Employees’, *Journal of Sociology and Welfare*, 34, 4 (2007), 9.

²⁰ Allegations of abuse at the hands of satanic cults – termed ‘Satanic ritual abuse’ with the McMartin case – emerged somewhat earlier in the Canadian based ‘survivor testimony’ of Michelle in *Michelle Remembers* (1980). With the blurb ‘The shocking true story of the ultimate evil – a child’s possession by the Devil!’, *Michelle Remembers* claims to reveal the suppressed memories of satanic abuse purportedly recovered through therapy.

²¹ D. Nathan, ‘Satanism and Child Molestation: Constructing the Ritual Abuse Scare’, in Richardson, Best and Bromley, eds, *The Satanism Scare*, 81.

²² DeYoung, ‘Two Decades After McMartin’, 9.

Beach alone, making it ‘the child molestation capital of the world.’²³ Kee MacFarlane, the social worker who interviewed the McMartin pre-schoolers, told Congress, ‘we’re dealing with an organized operation of child predators designed to prevent detection. The preschool, in such a case, serves as a ruse for a larger, unthinkable network of crimes against children.’²⁴ Facing over three hundred allegations of sexual abuse, Raymond Buckey, his sixty-two year old mother and several other employees of the ‘Nightmare Nursery’ were arrested in 1984, while the emergence of similar cases skyrocketed across the country.²⁵

Such nightmare nurseries appeared across the United States, and between 1983 and 1988 over a hundred communities had initiated investigations into the satanic molestation and torment of their children.²⁶ Indeed, by 1985, a new category of crime and sexual abuse was defined in the term ‘ritual abuse’ to describe sexual crimes occurring in ‘a context linked to some symbols or group that have a religious, magical or supernatural connotation, and where invocation of these symbols or activities, repeated over time, is used to frighten or intimidate the children.’²⁷ As DeYoung has argued, the allegations of the McMartin case provided a ‘master narrative’ for the ensuing cases over the decade. This ‘archetypically familiar plot’ championed the need to rescue and protect the innocent victims of such obscene abuse, and effectively recruited social workers and others into combating this newly identified form of child abuse.²⁸ Thus, the ‘Nightmare Nursery’ galvanised child protection activists, parents and other moral entrepreneurs into action – the problem of ‘ritual abuse’ effectively raising awareness of the physical and psychological vulnerability of children to new heights. Such a coalition manifested in the founding of groups like Believe The Children,²⁹ but also in the proliferation of seminars, workshops and conferences on ritual abuse and satanic cult crimes.

²³ D. G. Bromley, ‘Satanism: The New Cult Scare’, in Richardson, Best and Bromley, eds, *The Satanism Scare*, 53.

²⁴ Quoted in Bromley, ‘Satanism: The New Cult Scare’, 53 and Nathan, ‘Satanism and Child Molestation’, 76.

²⁵ The number of allegations is cited at about 350, the actual cases brought forward appear to have been less. See J. S. Victor, *Satanic Panic: The Creation of a Contemporary Legend* (Illinois: Open Court Publishing Company, 1993), 15 and Nathan, ‘Satanism and Child Molestation’, 75.

²⁶ Bromley, ‘Satanism: The New Cult Scare’, 59.

²⁷ Quoted in Nathan, ‘Satanism and Child Molestation’, 75. In addition to this, Frankfurter cites a more recent definition (2000): ‘Ritual abuse consists of traumatizing procedures that are conducted in a circumscribed or ceremonial manner. Such abuse may include the actual or stimulated killing or mutilation of an animal, the actual or stimulated killing of a person, forced ingestion of real or simulated human body fluids, excrement or flesh, forced sexual activity, as well as acts involving severe physical pain or humiliation. Frequently, these abusive experiences employ real or staged features of deviant occult or religious practices, but this is not always the case.’ D. Frankfurter, ‘Ritual as Accusation and Atrocity: Satanic Ritual Abuse, Gnostic Libertinism, and Primal Murders’, *History of Religions*, 40, 4 (2001), 356 – 357.

²⁸ DeYoung, ‘Two Decades After McMartin’, 9 – 33.

²⁹ Victor, *Satanic Panic*, 15 – 17 and 105.

Hosted by self-proclaimed experts like a new form of law enforcer – the ‘cult cop’ or ‘Satan hunter’ – as well as health care professionals, these conferences attracted worried parents, therapists, prosecutors, police and Christian fundamentalists.³⁰

Moral crusades against child abuse had grown considerably since the cultural revolution of the 1960s. Whilst the growth of the media strengthened charismatic Christianity and saw the emergence of televangelism, the 1960s also saw a flourishing the occult in popular media as well as highly publicised pagan wedding ceremonies and rituals of new age witches dancing ‘sky-clad’ for the press. Although the power of the tabloid media was integral to the revival and romance of witchcraft in the emergence of the neo-paganism, the media also opened a space to publically condemn such movements through a stream of devil-worship allegations.³¹ New religious movements like neo-paganism fought such a label, whilst others relished it – particularly the ex-circus performer and all-round showman, Anton LaVey who harnessed the power of media (rather than Satan) with ‘a formula of nine parts social respectability to one part outrage’,³² in founding the infamous Church of Satan in 1965.³³ However, whilst various forms of the ‘occult’ had become commonplace in popular culture by the 1980s, the demonology of the satanic ritual abuse panics engendered fears of a *secret* satanic cult whose influence and crimes were far-reaching. Best has noted that social reformers had cultivated considerable public concern over problems of child abuse, incest, child pornography and missing children during the 1970s and 1980s.³⁴ As Richardson and La Fontaine have argued, the convergence of several interest groups with the social problem of

³⁰ Also see R. D. Hicks, ‘The Police Model of Satanic Crime’, in Richardson, Best and Bromley, eds, *The Satanism Scare*, 175 – 189; R. D. Hicks, *In Pursuit of Satan: The Police and the Occult* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1991); B. M. Crouch and K. Damphousse, ‘Law Enforcement and the Satanism-Crime connection: A Survey of “Cult Cops”’, in Richardson, Best and Bromley, eds, *The Satanism Scare*, 191 – 204 and M. Kenny, ‘Setting a Wolf to Catch a Wolf: Psychiatry, Satanism, and the Anti-Cult Movement’, *Transcultural Psychiatry*, 37, 4 (2000), 601 – 617.

³¹ J. B. Russell and B. Alexander, *A New History of Witchcraft: Sorcerers, Heretics and Pagans* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1980 and 2007), 140 and 169 – 170. Also see M. Truzzi, ‘The Occult Revival as Popular Culture: Some Random Observations on the Old and Nouveau Witch’, *The Sociological Quarterly*, 13, 1 (1972), 16 – 36.

³² LaVey quoted in S. Cox and M. Foster, *An A to Z of the Occult* (Great Britain: Mainstream Publishing Company, 2007), 203. Also see G. Ashe, *The Hellfire Clubs: A History of Anti-Morality* (Great Britain: W. H. Allen & Co, 1974 and 2000), 239 – 240.

³³ J. T. Richardson, J. Best and D. G. Bromley, ‘Satanism as a Social Problem’, in Richardson, Best and Bromley, eds, *The Satanism Scare*, 8 – 9. Whilst Satanic Churches and gangs do exist, there is no proof of the widespread satanic cult that allegations describe. Whilst the Church of Satan and Church of Set are well known due to their media presence, they were quite peripheral to the panic. For discussion on this, see D. E. Taub and L. D. Nelson, ‘Satanism in Contemporary America: Establishment or Underground?’, *The Sociological Quarterly*, 34, 3 (1993), 523 – 541.

³⁴ J. Best, ‘Endangered Children and Antisatanist Rhetoric’, in Richardson, Best and Bromley, eds, *The Satanism Scare*, 95 – 96.

child abuse fuelled the satanic panic of the 1980s and 1990s, both within and beyond the United States. Christian fundamentalists, the anti-cult movement and growing campaigns for child protection found common ground in their concern for the vulnerability of children and the state of modern society.³⁵ These groups had communication and support networks that crossed the United States, as well as international borders, and were instrumental in spreading anti-Satanist claims and ritual abuse information.³⁶ To this end, the media played an integral part.

One of the first television shows to bring the satanic threat to living rooms across the United States aired on 16 May 1985, in a segment entitled 'The Devil Worshippers'. Satanism was reported as a widespread and serious threat, as the host of the popular show, *20/20*, warned of the 'perverse, hideous acts that defy belief. Suicides, murders, and ritualistic slaughter of children and animals.'³⁷ In 1987, lawyer and journalist turned talk show host, Geraldo Rivera proclaimed,

Estimates are there are one million Satanists in [the United States]. The majority of them are linked in a highly organized, very secret network. From small towns to large cities, they've attracted police and FBI attention to their Satanist ritual child abuse, child pornography, and grisly satanic murder. The odds are this is happening in your town.³⁸

Flamed by such sensational and usually unsubstantiated claims in the media,³⁹ rumour panics sparked in localities across the country with reported midnight sightings of hooded figures and the discoveries of 'satanic altars' and sacrificial remains.⁴⁰ Victor provides the example of a particularly virulent reaction to satanic rumours across the rural areas of New York, eastern Ohio and north-western Pennsylvania. Asserting that satanic meetings and animal sacrifices had occurred throughout the area, widespread rumour claimed that the satanic cult

³⁵ Regarding the Anti-Cult Movement, see J. G. Melton, 'Anti-cultists in the United States: an historical perspective', in B. Wilson, and J. Cresswell, eds, *New Religious Movements: Challenge and Response* (London: Routledge, 1999), 211 – 234 and G. D. Chryssides, 'Britain's anti-cult movement', in Wilson and Cresswell, eds, *New Religious Movements*, 255 – 274.

³⁶ Richardson, Bromley and Best, 'Satanism as a Social Problem', 5 – 11. Also see J. T. Richardson, J. Reichert, and V. Lykes, 'Satanism in America: An Update', *Social Compass*, 56, 4 (2009), 552 – 563 and J. La Fontaine, 'Satanism and Satanic Mythology', in B. Ankarloo and S. Clark, eds, *The Athlone History of Witchcraft and Magic in Europe. Volume 6: The Twentieth Century* (London: The Athlone Press, 1999), 129 – 132.

³⁷ Victor, *Satanic Panic*, 18.

³⁸ Quoted in Hunter, 'Interpreting the Satanic Legend', 251 and Victor, *Satanic Panic*, 32 – 33. For a discussion of the effects of television on ideas of Satanic cultism, see J. Gunn, 'Prime-time Satanism: Rumor-Panic and the work of iconic topoi', *Visual Communication*, 4, 1 (2005), 93 – 120.

³⁹ Although, as Richardson et al. have pointed out, the topic of Satanism did not have the same circulation in the 'prestige press', but rather the less 'hard news' sectors that ran feature stories and sensationalism. Richardson, Best and Bromley, 'Satanism as a Social Problem', 11 – 12.

⁴⁰ Bromley, 'Satanism: The New Cult Scare', 59.

required a blonde, blue-eyed virgin for their next sacrifice. Compounded by local economic stress and widespread anxiety about satanic cultism, the rumours gained momentum to the point where police were inundated by phone calls claiming to have seen robed figures on the streets and animals hanging from streetlamps. School attendance was drastically lower than usual, while youths patrolled the streets armed with baseball bats. Suspected ‘Satanists’ received harassing phone calls and death threats, whilst buildings suspected as ‘satanic’ locations were vandalized. At one point, suspected areas of ‘satanic ritual’ had to be surrounded by police barricades to prevent the onslaught of over a hundred vehicles in which hunting knives, guns and clubs were found.⁴¹ As such, whilst satanic panic was not limited entirely to *satanic ritual abuse* scares, this was by far the most prevalent and rigorously spread aspect. With the McMartin case, allegations of ritual abuse shifted from ‘survivor’ accounts of adults who ‘remembered’ their abuse, to the testimonies of children. As La Fontaine points out, this meant that alleged perpetrators could be rooted out and charged, essentially ‘the child victims brought the ideas out of the realm of belief into the world of action.’⁴²

By 1989, over fifty people had been formally charged and subjected to criminal trial on charges of ‘ritual abuse’ – half receiving prison sentences. In the majority of these cases the only direct evidence came from the testimonies of children aged between two and six and whose tales spoke of chanting, orgies, ritual sacrifice, the drinking of ‘magical’ concoctions, and often of being kidnapped in planes, boats and vans.⁴³ Initially, prosecutors were reluctant to try such cases due to a substantial lack of admissible evidence, but many states responded by adapting their legal framework to make it easier to try sexual abuse cases. These legal changes included the expansion of hearsay admissibility and the elimination of a minimum age of competency.⁴⁴ The claims of children ranged from the tenable to the bizarre. Dale Akiki, a thirty six year Sunday school babysitter, spent two and a half years on prison on charges of ritually abusing nine children aged between three and four years in 1988 and 1989. Akiki was charged with scalding the children with boiling water, forcing them to eat excrement, sacrificing an infant, as well as rabbits, an elephant and a giraffe.⁴⁵ Although defence attorneys pointed out the substantial holes in prosecutorial cases, including the lack

⁴¹ Victor, *Satanic Panic*, 28 – 29.

⁴² La Fontaine, ‘Satanism and Satanic Mythology’, 129.

⁴³ Frankfurter, ‘Ritual as Accusation and Atrocity’, 353; Victor, *Satanic Panic*, 16 and Hunter, ‘Interpreting the Satanic Legend’, 252.

⁴⁴ Nathan, ‘Satanism and Child Molestation’, 75. Also see DeYoung, ‘Two Decades After McMartin’, 9 – 33.

⁴⁵ ‘Falsely Charged With Child Abuse, Church Helper Sues’, *The New York Times*, 8 September 1994.

of direct evidence and the fact that children only spoke of these fantastical occurrences of abuse after being pressed by investigators and police, cases often incurred draconian sentencing.⁴⁶ In 1985, for example, the so-called ‘Bakersfield Seven’ received a total of 2619 years in prison on allegations of child abuse and conspiracy, a sentence wholly repealed in 1990 when gross prosecutorial misconduct was uncovered and several of the children recanted their testimonies.⁴⁷ Successful appeals increased as public interest in satanic ritual abuse began to falter against the ‘escalating chorus of criticism’ that emerged from studies into the role of investigators in coercing testimonies.⁴⁸ Whilst the interview-come-interrogation of hundreds of children in the rooting out of ritual abusers was traumatic to many, disturbing evidence has since emerged on the effects of these allegations on the accused. Richard Ofshe, an American cult expert, was asked to consult on the case of a fundamentalist policeman accused of ritually abusing his daughters after one of them ‘recovered’ her memories during a Christian church camp in 1988. The accused Paul Ingram initially denied the allegations, but also refused to believe that his daughters would lie. During his interrogation by fellow police officers, who suggested he might have ‘a devil in him’ or suffer from multiple personality disorder, Ingram began inducing trance-like periods in an attempt to uncover memories. He soon did, and confessed to the charges. Ofshe, however, was not convinced and asked this confessed ritual abuser to remember a ‘new’ allegation by the Ingram children. Using his memory technique, Ingram was able to remember the incident Ofshe wanted him to – except that Ofshe had fabricated the incident entirely. However, Ingram had been convicted and imprisoned by the time Ofshe could present his report, and despite recanting his testimony in its entirety he was refused appeal and only released in 2003.⁴⁹ These studies in addition to the regular recanting of testimonies by children undermined the dogma of the satanic panic and its crusaders that ‘children do not lie.’⁵⁰ It soon became clear that they did.

⁴⁶ Hunter, ‘Constructing the Satanic Legend’, 252.

⁴⁷ Noted in Bromley, ‘Satanism: The New Cult Scare’, 60 and Victor, *Satanic Panic*, 16. For details and links regarding Ritual Abuse trials, verdicts and testimonies see the online resource: *Victims of the State*, Child Abuse, <http://www.victimsofthestate.org/CC/CH.htm#B7>, available: 2 September 2011.

⁴⁸ DeYoung, ‘Two Decades After McMartin’, 11.

⁴⁹ Hunter, ‘Interpreting the Satanic Legend’, 253. and La Fontaine, ‘Satanism and Satanic Mythology’, 137. See R. Ofshe and E. Waters, *Making Monsters: False Memories, Psychotherapy, and Sexual Hysteria* (New York: Scribner, 1994) and D. Nathan and M. Snedeker, *Satan’s Silence: Ritual Abuse and the Making of a Modern American Witch Hunt* (Lincoln: Author’s Choice Press, 1995 and 2001). Well known, if controversial, work in the field of ‘suggestibility’ and ‘false memory’ has been conducted by Elizabeth Loftus. See L. Slater, *Opening Skinner’s Box: Great Psychological Experiments of the 20th Century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2005), 182 – 204.

⁵⁰ La Fontaine, ‘Satanism and Satanic Mythology’, 128.

The devil's decade belonged to the phantasmal children of Lucifer – that network of devil worshipping miscreants who gleefully corrupt the emotional, physical and spiritual innocence of youths with their perverse rituals. Widely publicized insistence that there was a real and growing threat of Satanism coupled with growing concerns over child and sexual abuse, the devil's decade saw hundreds of people tried by court and media fire for crimes ranging from paedophilia, murder, cannibalism and animal cruelty on claims that often amounted to little more than hearsay. It was a panic that destroyed families and lives, having traumatized children and sent many so-called Satanists to prison on unproven allegations.⁵¹ In the United States, a survey conducted by the National Centre on Child Abuse and Neglect of more than eleven thousand police departments, district attorney offices, social service departments, psychologists and psychiatrists across the country uncovered over twelve thousand allegations of satanic ritual abuse, *none* of which could be substantiated.⁵² Certainly, more than a decade of police investigation into satanic ritual activities found no evidence to support claims of ritual abuse or the alleged satanic crimes.⁵³ Similarly, over a hundred investigations by Kenneth Lanning, of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, revealed no evidence of satanic murder which 'survivor' testimonies allege occur frequently.⁵⁴ In 1990, the notorious McMartin case ended in deadlocked juries, mistrial and acquittal for its two remaining defendants, Raymond and Peggy Buckey who had spent five years in prison enduring what had become the longest and most expensive criminal trial in United States history.⁵⁵ Although believed innocent by many, in 1995 fifty-nine people in the United States were still incarcerated or had died in prison on allegations of ritual abuse, and others remain on the sex offenders list.⁵⁶

The 'Kiss of Shame' and Shameful Kisses: The Demonization of Satanism

The ungainly, death and the void, the horrendous, the vacuous, the sickening, the felonious, the spectral, the demoniac, the witchlike...*the satanic*.⁵⁷

⁵¹ This is still very much contested – many still advocate the legitimacy of 'survivor' testimonies and satanic ritual abuse. See C. A. Ross, *Satanic Ritual Abuse: Principles of Treatment* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1995) and V. Sinason, ed, *Treating Survivors of Satanist Abuse* (London: Routledge, 1994).

⁵² D. Goleman, 'Proof Lacking for Ritual Abuse by Satanists', *The New York Times*, 31 October 1994.

⁵³ Hunter, 'Constructing the Satanic Legend', 252.

⁵⁴ D. Oldridge, 'A New Witch-Hunt?', in D. Oldridge, ed, *The Witchcraft Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002), 416.

⁵⁵ Victor, *Satanic Panic*, 15.

⁵⁶ La Fontaine, 'Satanism and Satanic Mythology', 130. Nathan and Snedeker dedicated their book, *Satan's Silence: Ritual Abuse and the Making of a Modern American Witch Hunt* (1995 and 2001) to these people whom they believe innocent of the charges. Also see DeYoung, 'Two Decades After McMartin', 9 – 33.

⁵⁷ My emphasis. U. Eco, *On Ugliness* (London: Harvill Secker, 2007), 16.

Unsurprisingly, this Satanism scare has garnered comparison to the European witch hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries – both because it saw swathes of the public root out the devils in their midst, and because it merged old fears and contemporary grievances into a ‘single terrifying image’.⁵⁸ Essentially, the decade of the 1980s saw Satanism denoted a threat infinitely more grotesque and widespread. A demonization myth, as Stevens explains, ‘can be an awful, powerful thing, snowballing and engulfing people far beyond its cultural source. It generates rage, which wedges its way into culturally prescribed norms of reasonable behaviour, [and] obscures whatever was considered due process.’⁵⁹ While there had been isolated cases of rumour panic regarding Satanism in the preceding decade,⁶⁰ the satanic ritual abuse scares subsumed social anxieties and garnered widespread panic through an intensely violent and lurid fear-narrative in the early 1980s. Essentially, this emergent fear-narrative both fuelled and fed on the panic, whilst sanctioning draconian action against the accused.

Satanic panic was not unique to the devil’s decade. In the United States, the Midwest was plagued by hysteria over bizarre cattle mutilations that were widely believed to be the work of satanic cults or, perhaps even more widely believed, space aliens. Certainly the state-assigned investigator, Donald E. Flickenger, was willing to believe the claims of two imprisoned convicts that the cattle mutilations were linked to a gang of ‘hell oriented’ bikers also involved in blood ritual, human sacrifice, and plutonium theft. Claiming that they feared repercussion by the biker cult, the prisoners secured transfer to smaller prisons. From which they managed to escape, whilst Flickenger’s investigation of the alleged satanic bikers garnered no evidence.⁶¹ These opportunistic claims-makers aside, the hysteric speculation and rumour surrounding the cattle mutilation produced a rife and widely publicised panic over Satanism, government conspiracy and Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs).⁶² Having grown in strength and size since the 1960s, fundamentalist churches had long preached against the satanic ‘evils’ of rock music, which increasingly made reference to the devil and the occult, as

⁵⁸ Oldridge, ‘A New Witch-Hunt?’, 413 – 418 and La Fontaine, ‘Satanism and Satanic Mythology’, 86.

⁵⁹ Stevens, ‘The Demonology of Satanism’, 22.

⁶⁰ Ellis has pointed to earlier ‘satanic panics’ in Britain, as well as the influence of earlier developments in psychology that affected the Satanic Ritual Abuse Scares. See B. Ellis, ‘The Highgate Cemetery Vampire Hunt: The Anglo-American Connection in Satanic Cult Lore’, *Folklore*, 104, 1/2 (1993), 13 – 39 and B. Ellis, ‘Kurt E. Koch and the “Civitas Diaboli”: Germanic Folk Healing as Satanic Ritual Abuse of Children’, *Western Folklore*, 54, 2 (1995), 77 – 94. For examples of satanic-related rumour panic, see B. Ellis, ‘Death by Folklore: Ostension, Contemporary Legend, and Murder’, *Western Folklore*, 48, 3 (1989), 201 – 220; B. Ellis, ‘The Devil-Worshippers at Prom: Rumor-Panic as Therapeutic Magic’, *Western Folklore*, 49, 1 (1990), 27 – 49 and Victor, ‘Satanic Cult Rumors as Contemporary Legend’, *Western Folklore*, 49, 1 (1990), 51 – 81.

⁶¹ M. J. Goleman, ‘Wave of Mutilation: The Cattle Mutilation Phenomenon of the 1970s’, *Agricultural History*, 85, 3 (2011), 404.

⁶² Victor, *Satanic Panic*, 10.

well as spiritualism, astrology and fantasy in popular culture. These groups also regularly demonised institutions they considered ‘satanic’, including the World Wild Life Fund (WWLF) which was deemed pagan nature worship.⁶³ Perhaps the most famous of such crusades is that levelled at the American toy company, Proctor and Gamble, since 1980. Maintaining that its owner had made a pact with the devil and that the Proctor and Gamble logo (thirteen stars and a crescent moon) was satanic, fundamentalist Christians distributed warning flyers, boycotted their products, and even sabotaged some of the Company’s vans. Illustrative of the power of these claims, and of the fundamentalist networks, by 1982 Proctor and Gamble had to hire four staff members for the sole purpose of handling the daily mail regarding the company’s satanic connections – receiving over five hundred letters a day.⁶⁴ These incidents reflect the persistence of satanic fears in both isolated panics and moral crusades, and that the satanic threat emerges as rumour and legend, as well as a pejorative label to castigate social behaviour. However, the emergence of survivor ‘testimonies’, allegations of sexual abuse and torture in a ritual context, media hype and rumour engendered a far more violent and alarming spectre of Satanism than these earlier panics and campaigns. The claims made by interest groups combined with social anxieties to produce a nightmarish threat to modern society. This saw the threat of satanic cults move from animal mutilation and the music studio to the playground and home where young children were helpless against their sexual appetites and murderous proclivities.

According to ritual abuse survivors, psychologists, cult cops and Christian fundamentalists, the modern ‘Satanic Mass’ is practiced regularly by Satanists who appear normal to the outside world. On such an occasion, the area is cleansed of Christ’s influence through wicked chanting, and tarpaulin sheets are laid down to collect the blood and filth of the evening’s debaucheries. Fires are lit as the Satanists gather at night, each bringing with them the ceremonial items that they are charged with protecting. These items include the satanic lore, a sword, a dagger or the stuffed head of a goat. As it is a religious ceremony to Satan, the high priest reads and unholy sermon and the Satanists chant and pray to him. They then proceed to sacrifice a cockerel or a small animal, perhaps a human, often a child. According to testimonies, the Satanists regularly feast on the flesh of babies and small children. They also have a taste for foetuses, and often only the small bones remain. It is believed that satanic doctors and nurses procure aborted foetuses from clinics, or that pregnant cult members are

⁶³ La Fontaine, ‘Satanism and Satanic Mythology’, 123.

⁶⁴ Victor, *Satanic Panic*, 13 – 14.

given a ‘criminal abortion’ to feed the cult’s members. To the outside world, the mother will ‘simply announce that the baby was stillborn.’ Satanic parents are thought to hide the sacrifice of their older children by moving to a different house or getting a divorce. At these gatherings, it is claimed that Satanists sometimes murder runaway children, vagrants, or disobedient members of the cult by stabbing them in the heart, slitting their throats and draining them of their blood. Following the sermon, sacrifice and feasting, the Satanists smear their bodies, as well as those of the naked children, with bodily fluids and partake in a frenzied orgy, regularly penetrating the women and children with a crucifix.⁶⁵ It is at this ‘Satanic Mass’ that they induct the children into the cult. As one ‘survivor’ recalled,

I was carried to the toolbench where gibberish was spoken by the four adults around me. Rather than water sprinkled, a small, black, wriggling cocker spaniel was held over me and disembowelled with a dagger-like instrument...The long white taper was lit...It was then inserted, still lit, into my vagina. In this way I was welcomed into the faith.⁶⁶

Satanists are believed to take sadistic pleasure in terrorizing the children. Various claims include the tendency of satanic parents to give their children a puppy or kitten as a gift, watch as the child grows to love it, and force them to watch it slaughtered at the Satanic Mass. Other claims assert that sometimes cult members dress as clowns, entertain the children and promise them delicious food. Instead, the children are forced to eat excrement and rotting flesh and watch the adults enjoy a ‘mouth-watering’ feast in front of them. The satanic clowns, and sometimes Santa Claus, then rape the children.⁶⁷ Often the youngsters are intoxicated with drugs,⁶⁸ sometimes they are shocked with electrical currents, and occasionally their devil-worshipping parents prostitute them to paedophiles outside the cult. At the Satanic Mass they are taught that the Devil is all-powerful and that he will triumph over all,⁶⁹ and sometimes Satan even appears.⁷⁰

The scene has increasingly been consigned to phantasmagoria by the media, the public and academics alike. Children’s claims were often recanted and believed coerced, testimonies often belonged to mentally unstable adults suffering from schizoaffective disorders, whilst

⁶⁵ J. Coleman, ‘Satanic Cult Practices’, Sinason, ed, *Treating Survivors of Satanist Abuse*, 244 – 251.

⁶⁶ ‘Survivor’ Anne Hart, quoted in Frankfurter, ‘Ritual as Accusation and Atrocity’, 357 – 358.

⁶⁷ Coleman, ‘Satanic Cult Practices’, 244 – 251.

⁶⁸ P. Jenkins and D. Maier-Katkin, ‘Occult Survivors: The Making of a Myth’, in Oldridge, ed, *The Witchcraft Reader*, 419.

⁶⁹ Coleman, ‘Satanic Cult Practices’, 249.

⁷⁰ Jenkins and Maier-Katkin, ‘Occult Survivors’, 420. Also see Stevens, ‘The Demonology of Satanism’, 31 and Best, ‘Endangered Children and Antisatanist Rhetoric’, 97.

other ‘survivor’ accounts have been proven utterly fallacious.⁷¹ Nonetheless, these claims shaped a powerful fear-narrative of modern Satanism in which current concerns and fears were attached to a ‘blood ritual myth’ – the fear-imbued lore of a secret group of conspirators who gather to feast on the blood and flesh of the innocent and invert all that a society believes.⁷² To a large extent, this fear-narrative is built upon tales of the infamous ‘black mass’ whose notoriety stems from the witch killings it inspired, as well as the acts it describes. In early modern Europe, the tale of the ‘black mass’ wove together the tenet of the ‘feast of the conspirators’ with folk fears of witches that held them responsible for disease and storms, causing nightmares and stealing the milk from cows by milking the corners of their tablecloths.⁷³ It was believed that witches – the wretched servants of Satan – would sneak out of their houses to attend the midnight ritual of the Black Mass. They would steal out through the chimney and fly on a bewitched household item, or they would turn themselves into an animal to cover the distance to the meeting place. At their unholy ceremony the witches would feast on murdered children and relish in orgies, pulling to them strangers, family members, the young and old. When Satan appeared, sometimes as a great black animal, the witch would swear allegiance to him in exchange for power. Such a promise was sealed with a kiss – the ‘Kiss of Shame’ (*osculum infame*) in which the witch kneels to kiss the anus of the Devil in a gross inversion of the Christian ceremony of kissing the Pope’s ring.⁷⁴ Evoking tropes of evil including child murder, cannibalism, blood ritual and sexual perversity – the legend of the Black Mass inspired fear and hostility towards witches and fuelled the witch-hunts of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

These fear narratives are weighted by the image of feral carnality and the abandonment of reason, as well as the conspiratorial desires of those demonised to subvert and pervert the rest of society. In these scenes – the Black Mass and the modern Satanic Mass – the conspirators are shown to flout what is morally acceptable in a particular society and relish in perversity: bestiality, anal intercourse, incest, homosexuality, the thirst for bodily fluids, the gluttony for

⁷¹ Particularly influential ‘survivor’ testimonies, *Michelle Remembers* (1980) and Lauren Stratford’s *Satan Underground*, have been debunked. Jenkins and Maier-Katkin, ‘Occult Survivors’, 423. As has evangelist Mike Warnke’s *The Satan Seller* (1973) – which detailed his exploits as a drug addicted satanic high priest in league with the Illuminati, and their various crimes including kidnap and rape, before he found Jesus Christ. In the early 1990s, the Christian magazine *Cornerstone* exposed Warnke as a fraud.

See <http://www.cornerstonemag.com/features/iss098/sellingsatan.htm>, available: 3 September 2011.

⁷² Victor, *Satanic Panic*, 75 – 76.

⁷³ Russell and Alexander, *A New History of Witchcraft*, 144.

⁷⁴ La Fontaine, ‘Satanism and Satanic Mythology’, 122. Also see M. Pastoureau, *Black: The History of a Color* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2009), 139.

human flesh and their ill-begotten power. These intense fear-narratives, or demonization myths, serve to isolate a certain group, or behaviour as unacceptable and threatening to a society.⁷⁵ Thus, the modern ‘Satanic Mass’ interweaves several threads – modern, historical and mythical – in a fear-narrative wherein social problems and social anxieties intersect. Whilst ‘survivor’ testimonies and the claims of children often mention supernatural scenes – including the appearance of the devil, levitation and the ability of Satanists to change into animals – these have generally been ignored by secular therapists, social workers and police who believe in ritual abuse but not Satan. Fears that satanic cults abuse children does not rest on religious belief – not in the wake of the Jonestown tragedy of 1978 in which over nine hundred people committed mass suicide under the guidance of Reverend Jim Jones, or the Manson ‘family’ murders, and the Matamoros killings.⁷⁶ Essentially, as Oldridge has argued, ‘the theory of satanic abuse is a secularized version of the sabbat: the secret gathering of the Satanists to perform obscene acts of worship, indulge in unlawful sexual acts and murder young children.’⁷⁷ Whilst the fear-narrative of modern Satanism is secular, or rather secularized by its adherents, it is not simply the drudging to the present an old fear-narrative. The whirring and stutter of the satanic paedophile’s camera or the blinking red light of the pornographer’s video camera are recent additions. As is the image of the Baphomet – the inverted pentagram superimposed by a goat’s head has become the ‘most ominous of all satanic emblems and graffiti’, but was only popularised by the Church of Satan since the late 1960s.⁷⁸ However, the newest element of this demonization myth is that children are at the forefront as victims of sexual abuse. The sexual abuse of children became the common feature, whilst other forms of abuse were less consistent in allegations.⁷⁹ Thus, in addition to emotional and physical abuse, concerns about abortion, child pornography, prostitution, child slavery, incest, and drug addiction threaded through the allegations and the Satanism scare.

⁷⁵ La Fontaine, ‘Satanism and Satanic Mythology’, 124 – 125 and Stevens, ‘The Demonology of Satanism’, 24. For other work on demonologies in isolating another culture or social group, see N. R. C. Cohn, *Warrant for Genocide: The Myth of the Jewish World Conspiracy and the Protocols of the Elders of Zion* (London: Serif Publishing, 1996 and 2006) and D. Day, *Conquest: How Societies Overwhelm Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008). However, as La Fontaine notes, ‘their alleged breach is best understood as a symbolic statement about evil, rather than as a factual description of the reversal of human nature.’ La Fontaine, ‘Satanism and Satanic Mythology’, 125.

⁷⁶ The Matamoros cult killings were discovered in 1989 after an American university student went missing in Mexico and discovered to have been ritually murdered in pseudo-religious rituals by a drug-smuggling gang under Adolfo Constanzo. See T. Peters, ‘Bunk or Blasphemy?’, *Theology Today*, 51 (1994), 381 – 393 and Victor, *Satanic Panic*, 9 and 20 – 21.

⁷⁷ Oldridge, ‘A New Witch-Hunt?’, 415.

⁷⁸ The Baphomet idol is quite old, but this symbol is relatively modern – although its precise origins are unknown. Stevens, ‘The Demonology of Satanism’, 33.

⁷⁹ La Fontaine, ‘Satanism and Satanic Mythology’, 125 – 126.

The Devil haunts the Global Village: The Transnational Spread of the Satanism Scare

These fears surrounding the exploits of groups of satanic sexual predators were not contained by the borders of the United States, and emerged throughout the global West by the late 1990s. Gaining momentum in the wake of the original ‘Nightmare Nursery’ of McMartin by mid-1984, similar allegations appeared in Canada in 1985.⁸⁰ Crossing the Atlantic, allegations arose in Britain in 1987 where they steadily caught public attention. By 1988, the founder of a British charity declared that some four thousand infants were sacrificed to Satan each year.⁸¹ Fledgling apprehension had grown into panic by 1989, with widespread tales of secret ceremonies involving blood drinking, cannibalistic feasting on babies cooked in microwaves, and sexual abuse in hidden tunnels beneath cemeteries.⁸² Certainly, ‘American-inspired guidelines’ to identify victims of ritual abuse were disseminated throughout the social services, and conferences on the subject quickly arose.⁸³ Suspicions of ritual abuse and devil abuse resulted in scores of children taken into protective custody throughout the United Kingdom, including the removal of twenty children from their parents in a working-class area of Manchester because authorities suspected their parents of devil worship.⁸⁴ The United Kingdom’s panic peaked with the media frenzy surrounding the removal of children from two families in Orkney Island, Scotland, and their subsequent return to their homes by court order. In so ruling, the judge reprimanded the social service workers for being ‘obsessed with the belief’ in satanic cults, and questioning children in a manner that actually prompted a ‘great deal of fantasy’.⁸⁵ As a result, the government initiated an official enquiry, but the investigation into the forty-eight cases of alleged ritual abuse fostered no evidence to support the claims of a widespread satanic conspiracy.⁸⁶ Similar scares regarding Satanism and alleged ritual abuse surfaces in Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Australia and New Zealand by the late 1990s.⁸⁷

⁸⁰ La Fontaine, ‘Satanism and Satanic Mythology’, 130 and R. Lippert, ‘The Construction of Satanism as a Social Problem in Canada’, *The Canadian Journal of Sociology*, 15, 4 (1990), 417 – 439.

⁸¹ J. Pratt, ‘The Abusive Society: A Review Essay’, *Australian & New Zealand Journal of Criminology*, 35, 3 (2002), 386.

⁸² La Fontaine, ‘Satanism and Satanic Mythology’, 130. Also see P. Jenkins, *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Great Britain* (New York: Aldine de Gruyter, 1992).

⁸³ B. Amiel, ‘Where the law fails the Satanist; Child abuse cases’, *The Times* (London), 21 September 1990.

⁸⁴ Ellis, ‘The Highgate Cemetery Vampire Hunt’, 13.

⁸⁵ ‘Social workers obsessed by satanic abuse, judge says’, *The Times* (London), 18 December 1990.

⁸⁶ Oldridge, ‘A New Witch Hunt?’, 414. Jean La Fontaine conducted this enquiry, for more information see J. La Fontaine, *The Extent and Nature of Organised and Ritual Abuse* (London: HMSO, 1994) and J. La Fontaine, *Speak of the Devil* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

⁸⁷ T. Hjelm, H. Bogdan, A. Dyrendal and J. A. Petersen, ‘Nordic Satanism and Satanism Scares: The Dark Side of the Secular Welfare State’, *Social Compass*, 56, 4 (2009), 235 – 371; Pratt, ‘The Abusive Society’, 383 –

Dispersed trans-nationally by religious and professional networks, including those of psychologists and social workers, as well as the media, these scares were bound by their focus on satanic crimes against children. Best argues that these panics accentuated two intertwined threats – the abuse of children on the one hand, and the corruption of the children on the other.⁸⁸ These threats reflected the interests of the moral crusaders involved, as well as the intersection of social problems. Child abuse – and by extension rape, paedophilia and emotional trauma – were of particular concern to child protectionists and feminists, as well as growing arenas in the fields of psychology and medical health. Meanwhile, the corruption of the youth by popular culture had been a persistent concern of moral crusades whose ranks included Christian fundamentalists, the anti-cult movement and organisations of parents who sought to protect children from perceptibly harmful aspects of modern society. In addition to rooting out satanic paedophiles, the satanic panics of the 1980s and early 1990s fostered opportunities for agents of public morality to condemn rock music and fantasy role-playing games like ‘Dungeons and Dragons’ in the same vein that it did child pornography and drug addiction.⁸⁹ Binding heterogeneous concerns under alarm for the safety of children and the phantom of a satanic conspiracy, Satanism emerged as a social problem in the late twentieth century. Perceived as a threat to the moral foundations of a society, such a threat is also protean – variously linked to the perceptibly vulnerable aspects of a society and subsuming particular anxieties of the society in which it is ‘discovered’.

As such, modern Satanism was explicitly linked to the abuse of children and the corrupting effects of popular culture. Whilst this fear-narrative served to bind the concerns of crusaders and activists across the social sphere – from the secular to the religious, professional to parent – increasingly taboo-laden stories engendered a subversion narrative. This demonization of Satanism served to fuel the panic whilst reflecting social fears and desires. Whilst this demonization served to castigate certain forms of behaviour by linking them to the anti-social and anti-societal, the very manifestations of the fear-narrative and its power to grip widespread public attention reflected some underlying social anxieties. Here, Bromley has

402; La Fontaine, ‘Satanism and Satanic Mythology’, 130 – 131 and Richardson, Reichert and Lykes, ‘Satanism in America’, 553.

⁸⁸ Best, ‘Endangered Children and Antisatanist Rhetoric’, 95 – 100.

⁸⁹ See Best, ‘Endangered Children and Antisatanist Rhetoric’, 95 – 105 and D. Martin and G. A. Fine, ‘Satanic Cults, Satanic Play: Is “Dungeons & Dragons” a Breeding Ground for the Devil?’, in Richardson, Bromley and Best, eds, *The Satanism Scare*, 107 – 123. Concerns regarding the corruption of children through ‘toxic pop culture’ were not limited to the forays of the devil’s minions, and McDonnell has shown how various censorship crusades have persisted in the arena of ‘kid culture’. See K. McDonnell, *Kid Culture: Children and Adults and Popular Culture* (Australia: Pluto Press Australia Limited, 2000).

made a convincing argument in noting that the demonization of day-care during the 1980s revealed the discomfort of parents in having to depend on strangers to look after and raise their children while they worked. Certainly, the 1980s witnessed particular unease regarding changes in society as women increasingly moved into the workforce, divorce rates became acceptable and sexual mores continued to loosen in comparison to previous decades.⁹⁰ Arguably, Bromley's work implicitly draws attention to an important aspect in interpreting demonologies: an awareness of the geographical area of the panic itself, but also the geography of its fear-narrative.

Whilst the Satanism scare and its mythology spread across the global West, national variation did occur. For example, where the scares in the United States, Australia and New Zealand focused on very young children as potentially victimized in pre-schools and day-care centres, the glare of the British panic fell on the issue of parental abuse. In fact, there were only two cases involving alleged ritual abuse in British pre-schools, and these appeared as late as 1994. Similarly, the fear-narrative of the modern 'Satanic Mass' varied from country to country. Ritual abuse allegations in America, the United Kingdom and New Zealand had investigators searching for hidden tunnels beneath day-care centres and cemeteries.⁹¹ Stories of satanic clowns and nursery rhymes were common in America, Australia and Holland, but none of the cases in the United Kingdom or Scandinavia involved these elements. In explaining the transnational spread of the Satanism scare and its variations, La Fontaine asserts,

The international spread of allegations is not an indication that the same organization is operating in all the places where allegations are made; rather, the transmission of the mythology from place to place reflects the interconnectedness of societies whose cultures have a good deal in common. In particular, they share definitions of evil and a determination to eradicate it.⁹²

South Africa experienced some publicity around the issue of sexual abuse in a satanic context as early as 1986. Here the story of a young, white military conscript whose 'soul had been offered to the "prince of darkness" at a very early age, and who had to witness animals being slaughtered and drink their blood at Satanist rituals' became the concern of psychologists,

⁹⁰ Bromley, 'Satanism: The New Cult Scare', 49 – 70. Also see Victor, *Satanic Panic*, 181 – 183; Oldridge, 'A New Witch-Hunt?', 416 and La Fontaine, 'Satanism and Satanic Mythology', 116 – 118. Jenkins has made a similar argument with regards to the British panic, although with a heavier focus on the role of interest groups in *Intimate Enemies: Moral Panics in Contemporary Great Britain* (1992).

⁹¹ Pratt, 'The Abusive Society: A Review Essay', 383 – 402 and Ellis, 'The Highgate Cemetery Vampire Hunt', 13.

⁹² La Fontaine, 'Satanism and Satanic Mythology', 131.

clergyman and the press.⁹³ Aggressive, addicted to drugs and suffering from borderline personality disorder – the alleged ‘lifelong Satanist’ was found to be ‘the loneliest and most frightened human being in the world.’⁹⁴ Such concern was confined to the ranks of the clergy and psychology, however, and South Africa only endured a moral panic over Satanism several years later. Breaking out in 1989, the satanic panic in South Africa echoed trends abroad in that it engendered an intensely violent and destructive fear-narrative of Satanism. However, white South Africa *never* experienced a satanic ritual abuse scare. Although the moral panic over Satanism in South Africa, 1989 – 1993, fed off the transnational Satanism scare and shared the same concern over the vulnerability of children, these global concerns assumed a vernacular cast, shaped by the specific cultural and political changes in white South Africa.⁹⁵ In establishing the context in which a satanic panic emerged South Africa in 1989, explored in the next chapter, this chapter turns briefly to the change in the ontological nature of fears surrounding Satanism and youth culture in South Africa during the late 1980s.

Satan Crosses the Rubicon

While the tremors of the nightmare nurseries started reverberating across the United States, the mid-1980s saw many white South Africans acknowledge that white supremacy and apartheid policy were neither tenable nor beneficial. The divide between the *verligte* and *verkrampte* continued to erode the coherency of National Party strategy and white nationalist idealism. During the devil’s decade, the ruling National Party was increasingly forced to devote attention to crisis management in reaction to the escalating ‘people’s war’ against apartheid. In 1985, over forty magisterial districts were placed under state of emergency as anti-apartheid resistance met the repressive power of the state’s security forces.⁹⁶ Fulfilling their mandatory service to the apartheid state, young white males were confronted by the ‘people’s war’ in their patrols of black townships. Meanwhile, an aging P. W. Botha, his health failing, appeared increasingly indecisive and repeatedly fell to familiar rhetorical territory of ‘total strategy’. Whilst Botha and his supporters clung to the belief that they

⁹³ L. Kiesouw, ‘Case of the demon patient outlined at talk’, *Pretoria News*, 3 July 1986, 15.

⁹⁴ E. Trengrove, ‘Psychiatrists admit being “confounded” by Satanist’, *The Star*, 3 July 1986, 23.

⁹⁵ Moreover, La Fontaine notes that the kidnap panics that occurred in the United States in areas like New York and the reports that mutilated animal corpses were the work of Satanists were rare outside of the United States. However, as the next chapter shows, South Africa’s satanic panic (1989 – 1993) saw both of these elements occur. La Fontaine, ‘Satanism and Satanic Mythology’, 124.

⁹⁶ D. Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2009), 244.

fought against the evils of communism in defending Christian civilization in Africa, the decade was marked by increasing defection from hegemonic 'Afrikanerdom'.⁹⁷

Division and defection marked the decade of the 1980s as cultural and religious institutions turned away from the tenets of apartheid, whilst the long feared counterculture finally took flight among South Africa's white youth. Having grappled with internal tensions since 1982, the Dutch Reformed Church broke ties with the National Party government and apartheid policy in 1986. In adopting the controversial theological document entitled 'Church and Society', the bastion of Afrikaner religion began to condemn the separation of people on racial lines as sinful. This new path of the Dutch Reformed Church brought scathing critique from *verkrampte* political elements, including Andries Treurnicht of the Conservative Party.⁹⁸ Whilst hallmarks of Afrikaner nationalism like the Church and the Broederbond ('Afrikaner Brotherhood') went left, the *verkrampte* Conservative Party and ultra-right-wing organizations like the Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB) had grown in strength and size. By 1987, the Conservative Party had become the National Party's official opposition in white politics – a threat with which the caucus of the ruling party became increasingly concerned, to the chagrin of its younger members who urgently sought reform.⁹⁹

These changes in the ideological institutions of Afrikaner nationalism were echoed in the younger generation of white Afrikaners who began to swim against the cultural tides of their elders. Following the rapid success of the Afrikaner intellectual review *Die Suid-Afrikaan*, a soapbox wherein topics that would have been censored were rigorously debated, *Die Vrye Weekblad* issued weekly critique of the ruling regime. It critiqued in particular the Border War (1968 – 1989) that saw young, conscripted white males sent to fight the communist threat in Namibia and Angola.¹⁰⁰ The Border War increasingly became a bone of contention and resentment as the decade wore on. It was an unpopular war, particularly amongst the young soldiers forced to enter the army by state law, and many of who returned with post-traumatic stress disorder.¹⁰¹ Whilst this saw the emergence of the End Conscription

⁹⁷ H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *New History of South Africa* (Cape Town: NB Publishers, 2007), 255.

⁹⁸ J. Van Rooyen, *Hard Right: The New White Power in South Africa* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co, 1994), 87.

⁹⁹ Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 246.

¹⁰⁰ D. O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years: The apartheid state and politics of the National Party, 1948 – 1994* (Randburg: Raven Press, 1996), 372.

¹⁰¹ D. Craig, "'Total Justification': Ideological Manipulation and South Africa's Border War', in G. Baines and P. Vale, eds, *Beyond the Border War: New Perspectives on Southern Africa's Late Cold War Conflicts* (South Africa: University of South Africa Press, 2008), 68 – 69.

Campaign, a disaffected youth were also heard over the airwaves in the growth of a politicized Afrikaner music movement. The Voëlvry ('Fly Free') movement openly relished their own rebellion against the strictures of tradition, and attacked the nation's politicians, churches, media and symbols of Afrikaner culture through their music.¹⁰² As Welsh and other have noted, these developments exposed the moral fallacies of the apartheid regime.¹⁰³ Arguably, however, they were more significant – striking a chord with a questioning youth, and underscoring the movement of internal critique of white and particularly Afrikaner politics and identity from the periphery to the mainstream. These changes were not wholly welcomed, particularly by moral guardians who saw changing cultural norms as a threat to the health of white society.

Certainly, by the mid-1980s, a more vocal alarm over the influence of foreign rock music and drug culture began to be voiced from the pulpit. Echoing the concerns of the earlier satanic moral panic between 1978 and 1982, discussed in the previous chapter, warnings were issued against the 'satanic' influences of foreign rock groups like Black Sabbath and Queen. Such sentiments matched those of Christian fundamentalists in the United States, but also reflected the general distrust of foreign and countercultural elements.¹⁰⁴ With the growth of the Voëlvry movement, however, the gaze of such moral guardians shifted inwards – no longer fearing only the influence of 'foreign' culture. This newly inward-looking concern was also reflected in the report of the President's Council, a sixty-two member advisory committee, in 1987, which sounded alarm over the future of South Africa's youth – particularly with regards to the influences of popular culture transmitted television and radio. The report advocated the need for stricter censorship in order to halt the apparent increase of 'social deviation' and immorality, exemplified by homosexuality and heterosexual cohabitation.¹⁰⁵ As in other Western countries, these concerns were matched by the rise in awareness of the

¹⁰² A. Grundlingh, "'Rocking the Boat" in South Africa? Voelvry Music and Afrikaans Anti-Apartheid Social Protest in the 1980s', *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 37, 3 (2004), 483 – 514.

¹⁰³ Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 264.

¹⁰⁴ See, for example, 'Pop-musiek se invloed "destrukties"', *Die Volksblad*, 21 August 1986, 2; F. Esterhuysen, 'Beware of "satanic" pop music, NGK synod told', *The Argus*, 17 October 1986, 1; 'Church worried about Satan-worship', *The Star*, 17 October 1986, 11 and B. Stuart, 'Synod slams exponents of "Satanistic music"', *The Citizen*, 17 October 1986, 11. Also see S. Douglas, 'Do girls still say "no"?', *The Citizen*, 17 November 1980, 13; C. Bauer, 'This man is watching you', *Sunday Express*, 9 May 1982, 5 and 'Pop musiek "soms met Satanisme deurspek"', *Die Burger*, 16 October 1986, 4.

¹⁰⁵ 'Kommer oor video's', *Die Burger*, 18 June 1987, 6; 'Censorship to "curb violence"', *Business Day*, 18 June 1987, 4; 'Music Satanism "an old wives' tale"', *The Cape Times*, 19 June 1987, 15. For the State response to issues pertaining to homosexuality in South Africa, see R. Sinclair, 'The Official Treatment of White, South African, Homosexual Men and the Consequent Reaction of Gay Liberation from the 1960s to 2000' (DLitt et Phil thesis, Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg, 2004).

sexual abuse of children and paedophilia as a social problem.¹⁰⁶ Essentially, the second half of the decade witnessed increasing public debate regarding the influences on – indeed, the very future of – the white youth of South Africa. At times, these fears reverberated in alarm that the devil had gained a foothold in South African society.

Although real satanic panic only broke out in 1989, fears over the ‘grotesque’ desecration of white morality sounded in 1988 with reports of midnight orgies and animal sacrifices in hallowed cemeteries and on deserted beaches.¹⁰⁷ In Bloemfontein – ‘the Satanist capital of the country’ – the desecration of over thirty gravestones was deemed the work of ‘hooligans, or Satanists’ and stirred rebuke and rumour. Whilst it was noted that such acts were perpetrated ‘in God’s most holy sight’, rumour believed that the ‘tomb-wreckers’ were part of a coven of witches and warlocks who met to curse the area.¹⁰⁸ Meanwhile, a small scandal had erupted in the South African Defence Force when three young conscripts had drunkenly slaughtered a cat. Grisly photographs of the cat being skinned and decapitated, as well as posed shots of the animal’s head balanced on a whisky bottle and used as a finger puppet, caused outrage. The ‘senseless, merciless slaughter’ by these ‘crazed young men’ was quickly deemed a satanic ritual, it was alleged that the devilish conscripts had drunk the cat’s blood and sold its tail to African locals as ‘muti’.¹⁰⁹

A few months later, a Durban newspaper produced a series of articles which claimed that sadistic sacrifices and bizarre sex rituals were occurring throughout the city. Slashed and scratched, a local child was believed to have been recruited into a satanic cult, whilst ‘devil dabblers’ in a Pinetown school had ‘sacrificed a rat to the prince of darkness.’¹¹⁰ Two self-confessed ex-Satanists claimed they had attended Black Mass ceremonies in cemeteries across the country. During these rituals, black-clad youths ‘freaked out on drugs’ fell into bisexual orgies after chanting, dancing, talking in tongues and sacrificing animals like goats, chickens and cats to Lucifer.¹¹¹ Sometimes they purportedly sacrificed humans – particularly runaway teenagers who first fell prey to the lure of the disco, and then the drugs of Satanists

¹⁰⁶ B. Bowman, ‘Children, pathology and politics: a genealogy of the paedophile in South Africa between 1944 and 2004’, *South African Journal of Psychology*, 40, 4 (2010), 443 – 464.

¹⁰⁷ L. Clarke and J. Maker, ‘Bizarre Satanist Rituals Uncovered’, *Sunday Tribune*, 2 October 1988, 1.

¹⁰⁸ D. Capel, ‘“Satanists” desecrate graves’, *The Sunday Star*, 29 May 1988, 3.

¹⁰⁹ ‘Animal cruelty “rife in SADF camps”’, *Weekend Argus*, 7 May 1988, 1.

¹¹⁰ L. Clarke and J. Maker, ‘Bizarre Satanist Rituals Uncovered’, *Sunday Tribune*, 2 October 1988, 1.

¹¹¹ J. Maker and L. Clarke, ‘Devil’s Advocates: ritual slayings, sex orgies and masses by moonlight bound the agents of darkness’, *Sunday Tribune*, 2 October 1988, 3 and L. Clarke and J. Maker, ‘On the run from home – into the clutch of Satan!’, *Sunday Tribune*, 9 October 1988, 19.

who then delivered them into the hands of their robed high priest. When they were not kidnapped for sacrifice and sex, youngsters were recruited from beach parties and discos and embroiled in Satan's web of sex, drugs, and rock 'n roll. Newspaper reports also alleged that voodoo dolls and the charred remains of inverted crosses had been discovered, as had sightings of the satanic symbol '666' on city walls.

Determined to eradicate the 'epidemic' of Satanism 'in the playground', these claims by the press initiated only small-scale enquiry into the possibility of satanic activity in schools by some educators.¹¹² These fears remained restricted to ecclesiastical circles and press sensationalism. Indeed, in the letter columns of the same Durban newspaper, students contested the charge that their reading material, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, was satanic.¹¹³ Similarly, when anti-Satanist pamphlets urging students to 'burn their karate outfits' were disseminated at a Greyton school, parents responded in anger – dismissing the claims that linked yoga, karate, transcendental meditation and Buddhism to Satanism as fear-mongering religious intolerance.¹¹⁴ This scepticism shifted in early 1989, when parents, educators, government official, police and children themselves became convinced that a satanic threat conspired to cripple white South Africa.

Conclusion

Essentially, with international sanctions intensifying, the National Party government had fallen into confusion by 1988 – the once shrewd and seemingly indomitable Botha paralysed with indecision appeared to be losing the support of his party.¹¹⁵ As O'Meara has noted, by this time 'a powerful sense of *déjà vu* hung over white politics' for Botha now found himself in a position similar to that of his predecessor – the aged and embittered Vorster who had been ousted after an acrimonious battle for succession.¹¹⁶ In the waning years of the devil's decade, Botha's ailing health saw him dismissed from presidency in 1989: significantly both

¹¹² 'Satanisme in skole bekyk', *Die Vaderland*, 3 October 1988, 5 and J. Maker and L. Clarke, 'Call for probe into Satanism: Clergymen press for Government inquiry', *Sunday Tribune*, 9 October 1988, 1.

¹¹³ L. W. Evans, 'Find out who prescribed satanic book for matrics', *Sunday Tribune*, 16 October 1988, 16; M. Chapman, 'In Defence of Chinua Achebe: Deep study of cultural dislocation', *Sunday Tribune*, 23 October 1988, 30; 'Lots of meaning, nothing satanic', *Sunday Tribune*, 23 October 1988, 30 and D. P. Freel, 'One shouldn't judge a book by its cover!', *Sunday Tribune*, 23 October 1988, 30.

¹¹⁴ 'Occult pamphlets anger Greyton parents', *The Natal Witness*, 19 November 1988, 3; 'School tries to sort out Satanism row', *The Citizen*, 30 November 1988, 15; 'Churchmen hold talks on occult', *City Press*, 4 December 1988, 3 and 'Satanism pamphlet sparks row in Greyton', *The Daily News*, 10 December 1988, 1.

¹¹⁵ O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 377 – 378.

¹¹⁶ O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 380.

the beginning and end of his term of office were marked by a satanic panic. Echoing trends abroad, Satanism had come to be perceived as a social problem in South Africa by the late 1980s.

Within the milieu of tumultuous politics and rapid social change, fears of Satanism were revitalised by a violent fear-narrative that fed off such social anxieties and fuelled a satanic moral panic between 1989 and 1993. Corresponding with patterns in the international arena, white South African employed ‘cult cops’, manifested kidnap panics, rallies and government response and enquiry to the perceived threat of a clandestine cult of devil worshippers preying on children. However, whilst this panic occurred within the international Satanism scare explored in this chapter, as well as a broader climate of concern over the sexual abuse of children, South Africa never experienced a satanic ritual abuse scare. Interacting with the political and social climate in South Africa, global fears were localised and the satanic threat was largely located to high schools, university campuses and military camps – the frontiers of popular culture and popular dissent in white South Africa in the late 1980s. As South Africa moved towards democratic unity, a fraying political climate and fractured white society was met with the resurgence of *volk* devils.¹¹⁷ As the next chapter will show, long held fears of black rapists and communists – the iconic ‘black’ and ‘red’ perils – were combined with fears that a disgruntled youth posed a threat to white society, as well as the emergence of the ‘holism peril’¹¹⁸ in the moral panic over Satanism between 1989 and 1993.

¹¹⁷ Undertaken in 1988, a survey of white attitudes towards black rule showed that 88.3 per cent of Afrikaners and 67.9 per cent of English-speakers believed that communist policies would be implemented, 85.3 per cent of Afrikaners and 60.1 per cent believed that blacks would molest white women. Van Rooyen, *Hard Right: The New White Power in South Africa* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co, 1994), 60.

¹¹⁸ H. Viljoen, ‘Die nuwe paranoia’, *Vrye Weekblad*, 28 October 1993, 52.

Chapter Five:

The Path of Total Destruction:

The Devil, Democracy and Moral Panic in White South Africa, 1989 – 1993¹

The ‘Satanic Era’

Satanism, devil worship, ‘Wit Wolwe’ thuggery...This is what the children...are facing. And it is no use hiding our heads, ostrich-like in the sand, pretending this is ‘all just rumours’.²

As if we didn’t already have enough problems in this country, we have had our attention drawn in recent times to a new one: a substantial assault on the morals of our youth emanating from no less a foe than Satan himself.³

As apartheid died, the Devil made a bid for the control of white South Africa. In 1989, an aged P. W. Botha, blunted by bluster and failing health, exited the political arena. Botha’s successor, Frederick Willem de Klerk, held the reputation of being a ‘cautious pragmatist’⁴ and a political loyalty that had garnered him the nickname ‘Mr National Party’.⁵ However, it was this *verkrampte* National Party man who initiated the revision of South Africa’s political and social borders. On 2 February 1990, de Klerk announced the start of all-party negotiations for a South African constitution without preconditions.⁶ Moments before he announced the unbanning of communism and political parties, including the African National Congress and the Pan African Congress, as well as the release of Nelson Mandela, de Klerk noted that ‘after today South Africa will never again be the same.’⁷ Committing the country to the eventuality of ‘one person, one vote’, the scale of reform initiated by de Klerk was unexpected – even by the caucus of the National Party, who had not been made privy to their relatively green leader’s decision.⁸ Whilst a ‘New South Africa’ was imminent, the

¹ A version of this chapter has been accepted by the *Journal of South African Studies* under the title of “‘No less a foe than Satan himself’: The Devil, Transition and Moral Panic in White South Africa, 1989 – 1993”.

² ‘Knowing our children’, *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 23 August 1989, 6. The ‘Wit Wolwe’ was a white, violent right-wing group that arose in the 1970s. See D. Welsh and J. E. Spence, *Ending Apartheid* (Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited, 2011), 53.

³ I. Powell, ‘The backward theory of rock music’s “Satanic verses”’, *The Daily Mail*, 21 June 1990, 8.

⁴ Quoted in D. Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2009), 344.

⁵ P. Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle: The End of Apartheid and the Birth of the New South Africa* (England: Penguin Group, 1997), 109.

⁶ H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners: Biography of a People* (Cape Town: Tafelberg, 2009), 629.

⁷ Quoted in J. Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1999), 271.

⁸ O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 404 – 406. Decisions that fundamentally affected the political survival of Afrikaners could be made by the leader of the National Party without the consultation of the caucus. Giliomee provides several examples, including the decision of General Hertzog to enter a coalition with Jan Smuts in

atmosphere was fraught with uncertainty. Between 1990 and 1994, civil unrest and barely civil politicking intensified. On all sides, political hubris was aggravated by rogue elements determined to undermine negotiations or shift the balance of power. Talks repeatedly broke down and the death toll rose drastically.⁹ However, during this period of political unrest and change, many white South Africans became fixated on an entirely different black mass. ‘An era of evil, exploited by devil worshippers’, as one newspaper reported, ‘is spreading its tentacles into every strata of society.’¹⁰ In a milieu where the only certainty was that the era of white privilege had come to an end, it became feared that the children of Lucifer were paving the way to the ‘Satanic era’ in South Africa.

Across the country, newspapers reported that white youths were being led ‘down the path of total destruction.’¹¹ High on drugs and ensnared by lust, children were reportedly bound to Satanism and secrecy by shame, perverted pleasure and the promise of power.¹² Across South Africa, white children were reportedly being lured to the satanic ritual of the Black Mass where they made pacts with the devil as they supped on drug-laced wine and human flesh. Under the thrall of satanic adults, these children of Lucifer scrawled blasphemous insults in human excrement and blood, summoned demons and partook in frenzied orgies with males and females, the young and old, animals and demons.¹³ Warning reports of devil worship became increasingly widespread and virulent in 1989. By 1990, fears of the Satanic menace had spread across South Africa with reports of Satanism in Cape Town, the Peninsula, Paarl, Somerset West, Port Elizabeth, East London, Durban, Pietermaritzburg, Pretoria, Johannesburg, the East Rand, the West Rand, Oudtshoorn, Richards Bay, Dundee, Newcastle as well as several other small Karoo towns.¹⁴ Diabolic graffiti had been drawn, graveyards

1933, and that of Hendrik Verwoerd to implement the homelands policy and remove African representation from Parliament in 1959. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 630 – 631.

⁹ T. Ohlson, S. J. Steadman and R. Davies, *The New Is Not Yet Born: Conflict Resolution in Southern Africa* (Washington D. C.: The Brookings Institution, 1994), 2. In 1989, some 1403 people were killed in political action. This figure rose to 3699 in 1990, 2760 in 1991, and 3794 in 1993 for example. Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 288 and 301.

¹⁰ P. Candido, ‘Satanism goes on rampage’, *The Star*, 20 April 1991.

¹¹ J. Maker, ‘Cult targets schoolkids’, *Weekend Argus*, 23 May 1990, 15.

¹² ‘Kinders dalk vermis deur Satanisme’, *Oosterlig*, 27 July 1989, 1; ‘Sataniste lok jonges’, *Beeld*, 29 July 1989, 4; ‘Cops lift veil on Satanism in PE’, *Weekend Post*, 5 August 1989, 1; ‘Tiener in greep van Satanisme’, *Oosterlig*, 7 August 1989, 1; A. Kafaar, ‘Satanism in city’, *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 21 August 1989, 2 and S. Bartlett, ‘Many PE kids in Satanism’, *Evening Post*, 22 May 1990, 1.

¹³ “‘In most sects it’s the rule to sacrifice humans’”, *Sunday Tribune*, 10 June 1990, 2. Also see ‘Child and animal killings alleged in bizarre rituals’, *Weekend Argus*, 19 May 1989, 15; ‘Devil Cult: Shock report on city’, *The Cape Times*, 19 May 1990, 1; J. Maker, ‘PE Satanist: I ate human flesh’, *Evening Post*, 21 May 1990, 1 and ‘Move to probe Satanism is welcome step’, *Evening Post*, 14 June 1990, 2.

¹⁴ See, for example, ‘Devil Cult: Shock report on city Satanism’, *The Cape Times*, 19 May 1990, 1; ‘Child and animal killings alleged in bizarre rituals’, *Weekend Argus*, 19 May 1990, 15; T. McElligot, ‘Durban a centre of

had been desecrated, children were missing and divorce rates were increasing.¹⁵ Tales of blood smeared walls and burnt excrement – ‘typical of their perversions’ – were rife,¹⁶ as were rumours of black-clad people who ‘looked like spooks’.¹⁷ Numerous warning reports claimed that satanic prowlers were searching for sacrificial victims, that white cars were trailing children around school districts,¹⁸ and that Satanists were recruiting children through drug-laced soft drinks, sweets and stickers.¹⁹ Caught in the devil’s trap, children were raped and abused, placed in graves with dead bodies and forced to slaughter animals.²⁰ In Cape Town, a policeman claimed to know of at least eleven white babies sacrificed to Satan – their throats slit and hearts eaten by devil worshippers.²¹ It was claimed that satanic parents laid their own children upon the altar and that unwed mothers were enticed to hand over their newborns.²² Other reports claimed that the doomed infants were bred especially for the grisly satanic rituals by ‘warlocks’, and that body parts and foetuses were regularly stolen from hospitals.²³

Satanism’, *The Daily News*, 12 May 1990, 15; ‘The dark secrets of a large house...’, *Weekend Argus*, 19 May 1990, 15; ‘All-black house reveals secrets of Satanism’, *The Sunday Star*, 20 May 1990, 13; ‘Satanisme in O-Kaap: Die bewyse’, *Oosterlig*, 21 July 1989, 1; ‘Oudtshoorn skole het Satan-selle – leraar’, *Die Burger*, 24 July 1990, 2; ‘Vlaag van Satanisme teister skole’, *Die Volksblad*, 24 July 1990, 1 and “Satanisme” skok Karoodorp’, *Die Burger*, 25 July 1990, 4. Also see J. and H. Gardiner, *Satanism: The Seduction of South Africa’s Youth* (Port Elizabeth: Lion Life, 1990), 29.

¹⁵ See, for example, ‘Fears of Satanism keep children away from school’, *The Star*, 1 May 1991, 5 and P. Candido, ‘Satanism goes on rampage’, *The Star*, 20 April 1991. According to the South African Statistics Service, divorce rates in South Africa’s white population showed a steady increase from the 1970s – with an estimated 10 730 divorces in 1975, 16 543 divorces in 1980, 17 035 divorces in 1985, and 20 031 divorces in 1990. See: Central Statistical Service, *Bulletin of Statistics*, 15, 1 (March 1981), 1.3, Central Statistical Service, *Bulletin of Statistics*, 19, 4 (December 1985), 1.4., Central Statistical Service, *Bulletin of Statistics*, 22, 4 (December 1988), 1.3 and Central Statistical Service, *Bulletin of Statistics*, 31, 1 (March 1997), 1.2.

¹⁶ ‘Satanic worship feared to be increasing’, *Pretoria News*, 14 August 1989, 4.

¹⁷ An East London based priest quoted in ‘Satanism evident in EL house’, *Daily Dispatch*, 10 August 1989, 1. Also see ‘East London said to be Satanist headquarters’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 10 May 1990, 6 and ‘Satanisme in O-Kaap: Die bewyse’, *Oosterlig*, 31 July 1989, 1.

¹⁸ See, for example, ‘Landwey histerie by skole oor Satanisme’, *Die Burger*, 1 May 1991, 1 and A. Goldstuck, ‘Satanic secret of the Birthday bus’, *Weekly Mail*, 3 – 9 May 1991, 5.

¹⁹ K. Jonker, *Satanism Exposed* (Pretoria: Sigma Press, 1992), 12. Jonker presents this rumour as fact, but supplies no verifiable evidence. DiFonzo and Bordia have defined rumour as ‘unverified and instrumentally relevant information statements in circulation that arise in contexts of ambiguity, danger or potential threat, and that function to help people make sense of and manage risk.’ N. DiFonzo and P. Bordia, ‘Rumour, Gossip and Urban Legends’, *Diogenes*, 213, (2007), 19 – 20.

²⁰ J. Maker, ‘Devil disciple told to kill son’, *The Sunday Star*, 20 May 1990, 13 and J. Maker, ‘PE Satanist: I Ate Human Flesh’, *Evening Post*, 21 May 1990, 1.

²¹ ‘Devil cult: Shock report on city Satanism’, *The Cape Times*, 19 May 1990, 1; A. Duggan, ‘Satanic ring “killed babies”’, *Sunday Times*, 20 May 1990, 1; P. Claasen, ‘Satanisme: “Wit babas in rituele geoffer”’, *Die Burger*, 19 May 1990, 1; “Babas geoffer aan Satan” Polisie oor verhale van gruwels’, *Rapport*, 20 May 1990, 2 and M. Graaf, ‘Cop: How to crack Satanism’, *The Cape Times*, 21 May 1990, 3.

²² ‘Child and animal killings alleged in bizarre rituals’, *Weekend Argus*, 19 May 1990, 15.

²³ M. McGhee, ‘Devil worship is countrywide, claims churchman’, *The Citizen*, 22 May 1990, 15; A. Duggan, ‘Satanic ring “killed babies”’, *Sunday Times*, 20 May 1990, 1 and Gardiner and Gardiner, *Satanism*, 30 – 31.

Whilst bringing horrific allegations of satanic activity in South Africa to the forefront of the public imagination, anti-satanic crusaders grudgingly admitted that ‘getting hold of a real Satanist proved as easy as catching the wind.’²⁴ For claims-makers the lack of evidence did not deter from the reality of Satanism. Indeed, it underscored the very power of these ‘masters of deception [who] are able to disguise their activities to such an extent that no trace can be found.’²⁵ To some, however, such reports spoke of little more than the imaginary spectres in the minds of conservative Christians and self-appointed moral watchdogs. Despite lack of proof and the repeated cautions of both police and church officials not to act on hearsay,²⁶ widespread rumour facilitated the growth of anxiety and hostility towards the perceived satanic menace.²⁷ These fears were intensified by the repeated allegations that white community leaders, public figures and professionals were secretly working for Lucifer.²⁸ The sentiment produced was simple but widespread: Satanism was ‘a putrid scar on an otherwise decent society’²⁹ and ‘in a civilized society there is just no place for these depraved people.’³⁰ It seemed apparent that there existed a malignant web of Satanists whose sole ambition was to cripple the South African nation, and that ‘the softest target for corruption’ was the country’s white youth.³¹

Capping a decade of political and economic tumult in the death throes of apartheid, the period between the end of the apartheid-era and the birth of the ‘new South Africa’ was marked by widespread unrest and uncertainty. Indeed, as one columnist noted in the waning months of 1989, the notion of ‘managing change’ in South Africa had become untenable – the country

²⁴ Gardiner and Gardiner, *Satanism*, 27.

²⁵ L. Els and K. Jonker, *Satanism in South Africa* (Lynnwood Ridge: Amabhuku Publications, 2000), 11.

²⁶ Even churchmen were sceptical. As one Methodist reverend noted, ‘of course the church is totally against Satanism, but one just wonders how much of these claims are substantiated. One wonders if this some kind of ploy to evade real issues.’ C. Le Grange, ‘Church cautious on Satanism reports’, *The Star*, 22 May 1990, 13. Also see ‘Police dismiss talk of Satanism’, *The Natal Witness*, 9 August 1990, 3; ‘Police probe Satanism’, *The Cape Times*, 22 August 1990, 3 and C. Kotze and M. Nicolson, ‘Police can’t confirm “Satanist grave sites” report’, *The Star*, 22 August 1990, 3.

²⁷ Anxiety over Satanism was predominantly considered a white problem, and believed to be a largely white crime.

²⁸ See, for example, ‘Devil cult: Shock report on city Satanism’, *The Cape Times*, 19 May 1990, 1; J. Maker, ‘Devil disciple told to kill son’, *The Sunday Star*, 20 May 1990, 3; A. Duggan, ‘Satanic ring “killed babies”’, *Sunday Times*, 20 May 1990, 1; ‘Satanism: A reality to be confronted’, *Evening Post*, 22 May 1990, 2; “‘In most sects it’s the rule to sacrifice humans’”, *Sunday Tribune*, 10 June 1990, 2; ‘Move to probe Satanism is welcome step’, *Evening Post*, 14 June 1990, 2 and ‘Satanists meeting city’, *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 27 August 1990, 1.

²⁹ Leonard Gray, a preacher from the Church of Christ in East London quoted in J. Houzet, ‘Satanism: a reality’, *Daily Dispatch*, 19 April 1991, 4.

³⁰ ‘Satanism: Appalling claims’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 21 May 1990, 10.

³¹ S. Sole, ‘Teens a target for netherworld’, *Weekend Argus*, 27 September 1992, 6.

was now ‘floating with chaos’.³² With apartheid in rigor mortis and the Rainbow Nation in gestation, South Africa occupied a tense liminal space between 1989 and 1994. ‘The old is dying, and the new cannot be born,’ wrote Antonio Gramsci, ‘in this interregnum a great variety of morbid symptoms appear.’³³ This chapter explores one such ‘morbid symptom’ in South Africa’s transition to democracy, as fears of the Devil and his minions evolved into a moral panic between 1989 and 1993. In white South African society, the horror of devil worship was systematically merged with a host of socially undesirable behaviours including drug abuse and homosexuality, as well as with the influences of popular culture and the ‘New Age’. As this chapter shows, the threat of Satanism also became a scapegoat. As a vehicle of expression, this particular folk devil manifested underlying anxieties regarding white hegemony and cultural unity as South Africa’s political and social borders were transformed.

Morbid Symptoms, the Devil and Democracy: Moral Panic, 1989 – 1993

By the time the political tide turned in February 1990, white South Africans were anxiously aware that the *status quo* could not continue. The country needed, as de Klerk asserted, ‘to escape from a corner where everything had stagnated in confrontation.’³⁴ During the 1980s, policing the geographic and social boundaries of the apartheid state had become increasingly costly, both to the economy and morale of white South Africa. Between 1985 and 1988, white conscripts were deployed to Namibia to defend against the communist threat, whilst others policed the racial unrest of the ‘people’s war’ within South Africa.³⁵ Although the ‘seizure of power’ desired by black resistance was prevented by the State’s security forces, on-going internal conflict together with international sanctions worked to nullify the ideological cohesion of apartheid. With the economy suffering, unemployment and inflation increased and the average standard of living dropped, whilst an increasingly torpid government appeared paralysed with indecision.³⁶ On the cultural terrain, bastions of Afrikaner nationalism began to turn with the tide against apartheid. In what many called ‘conversion without repentance’, the Dutch Reformed Church broke ties with apartheid

³² H. Tyson, ‘Our land is an altered State’, *The Star*, 7 October 1989, 10.

³³ T. Ohlson, S. J. Stedman and R. Davies, *The New Is Not Yet Born*, 1. Also see S. Jones, *Antonio Gramsci* (Routledge: New York, 2006), 99 – 101.

³⁴ Quoted in Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 274.

³⁵ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 615.

³⁶ B. J. Liebenberg and S. B. Spies, eds, *South Africa in the 20th Century* (Pretoria: J. L. van Schaik Academic, 1993), 525 – 526; Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 343 and Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 274.

ideology and the National Party in its 1986 and 1990 synod meetings.³⁷ In the same period, a dissenting Afrikaner youth began to grumble over the airwaves and on university campuses, as the younger generation increasingly chafed under apartheid 'Afrikanerdom'.³⁸ Under diverging class and generational desires, the cultural solidarity and ideological cohesion of Afrikaners became increasingly fractured as the 1980s progressed.

By 1988, the National Party was bleeding support to the political left and right. As faith in P. W. Botha declined after his ill-fated Rubicon speech in 1985, the white right-wing and the Conservative Party steadily encroached on the constituency of the ailing National Party.³⁹ The weakening political hold of the ruling party was exacerbated by the collapse of communism, the legitimacy of the rhetorical menace falling with the Berlin wall in November 1989. Simultaneously, however, the African National Congress and the liberation struggle lost communist support.⁴⁰ While the white elite generally favoured reform, grassroots concern for the protection of white security and white privilege remained prominent among the rank and file of white South Africans. Indeed, surveys conducted in the late 1980s showed that the majority of whites – including university students – were not in favour of a government led by the African National Congress. The majority of white South Africans, both English and Afrikaans, reflected fear that the physical and cultural safety of whites would be threatened by black majority rule, whilst the standards of living would drop, crime would increase and white women would be sexually and physically molested by black men.⁴¹ However, even here the realisation that the *status quo* could not continue was clear. In noting the necessity of reform, the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, warned: 'a maelstrom of increasing isolation, boycotts, sanctions and violence can only lead to poverty and endless misery for the entire population.'⁴² Facing only continued economic, political and civil difficulties, by 1989 the National Party had, as Pik Botha noted, 'run out of alternatives.'⁴³ White reform and black resistance met in deadlock, and whilst the democratic

³⁷ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 620 – 621.

³⁸ Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 204.

³⁹ O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 377.

⁴⁰ Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 274.

⁴¹ For example, the survey by Hugo conducted in 1988 showed that 82 percent of Afrikaners and 79 percent of English-speakers believed that law and order would not be upheld, 91.4 percent of Afrikaners and 78.25 percent of English-speakers believed that black discrimination against whites would be implemented, and 85.3 percent of Afrikaners and 60.1 percent of English-speakers believed that white women would be molested by blacks. See J. van Rooyen, *Hard Right: The New White Power in South Africa* (London: I. B. Tauris & Co, 1994), 59 – 60. Also see Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 595 and 608.

⁴² O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 402.

⁴³ Quoted in Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 274.

era was imminent, the period of change was imbued with uncertainty and unrest.⁴⁴ However, while February 1990 became the hallmark of democratic change in South Africa, it also marked the transition between two interregna in South African politics.

The first interregnum occurred in the intra-party politicking of the National Party. Aggravated by the perceptible failure of apartheid, the caucus of the National Party became increasingly frustrated with Botha's 'deadend politics' and increasingly arbitrary behaviour.⁴⁵ On 18 January 1989, Botha suffered a mild stroke and, in a move that shocked the caucus, resigned as leader of the National Party.⁴⁶ He decided to remain, however, as the State President – splitting the role from the traditional grasp of the party leader – so as to act as 'a special force for cohesion in our country.'⁴⁷ In the resulting squabble for succession, the conservative leader of the Transvaal National Party, F. W. de Klerk, scraped a win against the *verligte* Barend du Plessis with 69 votes to 61.⁴⁸ Welsh and Spence have argued that the narrow loss of a *verligte* member was indicative of the general desire for reform.⁴⁹ O'Meara, on the other hand, has decried it the result of a 'poverty of choice' – du Plessis having been regarded as one of South Africa's worst Ministers of Finance and a 'veritable Prince of Mediocrity'.⁵⁰ Nonetheless, taking on the mantle of National Party leader, de Klerk – who had unwaveringly toed the party line, but never been admitted into Botha's inner circle – announced that it was 'time for a great leap forward.'⁵¹

The caucus leapt, albeit unwittingly, a year later in February 1990. However, it first endured several months of diarchy between the frustrated leader of the National Party, F. W. de Klerk, and the volatile State President, P. W. Botha.⁵² The lingering Botha and his grip of the State presidency only exacerbated the National Party's problems. With the September 1989 election fast approaching and newspapers calling for his resignation, Botha had, as one commentator noted, made the extraordinary zoomorphic transformation from the shrewd 'old

⁴⁴ Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 269 and 343.

⁴⁵ Quoted in O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 384 and Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 271.

⁴⁶ Botha also suffered a stroke in 1988, which was hushed up by the government. His second stroke in 1989, whilst relatively mild, incapacitated him for several months. It is speculated that Botha's actions in the late 1980s, and his arbitrary behaviour, were affected by dwindling mental health aggravated by stroke. Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 266 – 267.

⁴⁷ Quoted in O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 389.

⁴⁸ J. Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 271.

⁴⁹ D. Welsh and J. E. Spence, *Ending Apartheid* (Great Britain: Pearson Education Limited, 2011), 60.

⁵⁰ Noted and quoted in O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 385.

⁵¹ Quoted in Waldmeir, *Anatomy of a Miracle*, 109.

⁵² Welsh and Spence, *Ending Apartheid*, 60.

crocodile' into a political 'albatross'. With the National Party already straining under diverging ideas of reform, Botha was ejected from the political arena during a tense cabinet meeting on 14 August 1989.⁵³ As each of his ministers admitted him unfit for office, Botha's temper flared, insults flew and Botha resigned embittered.⁵⁴ Although de Klerk was now able to consolidate his control, the National Party still faced a number of problems – including the political left and right. Although not a cohesive movement, the 'white right' was bound by racial concern for the preservation and protection of white power and white identity.⁵⁵ By the late 1980s, the political right had also made a great leap forward – in the polls – garnering the support of nearly half the Afrikaner constituency.⁵⁶ Moreover, by 1990 more than twenty right-wing paramilitary groups and thirty fundamentalist organisations were operating in the country.⁵⁷ The September 1989 election underscored the weakened National Party and its fractured constituency, which increasingly seeped into the political right and left. Indeed, for the first time since 1958, the once indomitable National Party received less than half the votes and lost twenty-seven seats in parliament. The representation of the Conservative Party, on the other hand, increased from twenty-two seats to thirty-nine, whilst the liberal Democratic Party received twenty per cent of the votes.⁵⁸

The strength of the 'white right' continued to vex the National Party during South Africa's tense period of negotiation and transition initiated in February 1990. Indeed, Andries Treurnicht's Conservative Party declared de Klerk's landmark speech the start of the Afrikaners' 'Third War of Liberation'. While the Conservative Party turned to politicking and decried the National Party as betraying its people and legalising terrorism and communism, other paramilitary right-wing groups turned to acts of violence.⁵⁹ In this vein, the South African police and military were also a cause of concern for the National Party reformists.⁶⁰ Certainly, before 1990 de Klerk had removed much of the institutional power that the security forces had enjoyed under P. W. Botha, particularly when it became clear that

⁵³ Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 267 – 268.

⁵⁴ Quoted in O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 380.

⁵⁵ Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 281 – 282.

⁵⁶ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 608.

⁵⁷ These included the particularly vehement Afrikaner Weerstandsbeweging (AWB), as well as Boere Krisisaksie, Boere Weerstandsbeweging, Brandwag Volksleer, Stormvalke, White Front, Aquila Defence Unit, White Security, White Wolves (Wit Wolwe), Flamingos, Order of Death, White Commando, and Cape Rebels. J. van Rooyen, *Hard Right*, 91 – 92.

⁵⁸ Welsh, *The Rise and Fall of Apartheid*, 273 and O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 400 – 401.

⁵⁹ The other two 'Liberation Wars' were the Transvaal revolt following the annexation of the Transvaal by the British (1880 – 1881) and the Anglo Boer War (1899 – 1902). Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 633.

⁶⁰ With regards to the challenges of and to the police force, see J. D. Brewer, *Black and Blue: Policing in South Africa* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

some highly ranked officials would not hesitate to subvert political change.⁶¹ Black politics were also plagued by difficulties of consensus and control. The African National Congress, for example, had long operated as a ‘broad church’ of resistance, and now faced the task of integrating the political exiles with the ‘inziles’ who had fought from within the country’s borders, as well as the opposing views of its members, which included Stalinists, democratic socialists and ‘Christian liberals’.⁶² Meanwhile, having made the promised leap forward, De Klerk’s 1990 speech reaped several rewards for the National Party, including the removal of sanctions against South Africa which was soon welcomed back into the fold of the global West.⁶³

In 1990, South Africa moved into the interregnum of ‘talks about talks’. While this period of negotiations and conventions eventually resulted in an interim constitution and democratic election in April 1994, it was marked by the intensification of both intra- and inter- white and black politicking and violence. In May 1990, ‘talks about talks’ between the government and the African National Congress commenced, and the Groote Schuur and Pretoria Minutes ostensibly committed both parties to a transition marked by peace rather than violence.⁶⁴ However, change progressed haltingly over the next three years. In 1991, de Klerk opened parliament by announcing the dissolution of the last remaining apartheid laws, including the Land Act and the Population Registration Act.⁶⁵ Violence, however, was widespread. Some elements of the reactionary ‘white right’ turned to terrorism – committing over fifty terrorist acts in 1990, while allegations that a ‘Third Force’ in the military-ranks were attempting to subvert peace were endemic.⁶⁶ In black townships, Natal and the midlands seethed with the violence of ‘people’s courts’ and ‘necklacing’.⁶⁷ Although formal negotiations commenced in December 1991, with the Convention for a Democratic South Africa (CODESA), on-going civil unrest strained the harmony between Mandela and de Klerk. Early in the negotiations, de Klerk accused the African National Congress of failing to comply with earlier accords and end their armed struggle. Mandela rebutted by charging de Klerk as complicit with ‘Third

⁶¹ Welsh and Spence, *Ending Apartheid*, 118. This was evidenced by the attempt by some members of the South African Defence Force’s high command to undermine the Namibian elections, resulting in the call by the Afrikaans press to censure the control of the police and SADF. O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 403.

⁶² Welsh and Spence, *Ending Apartheid*, 118 – 119.

⁶³ O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 409 – 410.

⁶⁴ Welsh and Spence, *Ending Apartheid*, 122.

⁶⁵ O’Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 408.

⁶⁶ Van Rooyen, *Hard Right*, 195.

⁶⁷ Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 288. Also see Brewer, *Black and Blue*, 321 – 331.

Force' violence and attempting to undermine the power of the African National Congress.⁶⁸ Crumbling negotiations were hastened by the Boipotong massacre on 17 June 1992, when a crowd of African National Congress supporters were shot in the township of Boipotong.⁶⁹ The African National Congress suspected the 'Third Force', alleging that a network of 'men at the highest levels of the security forces' were the real culprits behind the widespread black-on-black violence in South Africa. However no evidence of an organised group has ever been uncovered.⁷⁰ Meanwhile, having knocked heads in the deadlocked negotiation, the African National Congress sounded a call to action with 'Mandela's referendum', which saw mass campaigns and demonstrations 'to show the government that the real power lay with it on the streets.'⁷¹

Together with an economy struggling under the weight of violence, democratic pressure pushed the government to make several concessions. Although de Klerk was regarded as having lost this particular battle of wills,⁷² the concessions reinvigorated the negotiation process and on 26 September 1992, de Klerk and Mandela signed the Record of Understanding.⁷³ This, as O'Meara notes, signified the end of the National Party's attempts to outmanoeuvre the African National Congress, and the start of real negotiations.⁷⁴ Meanwhile, rising crime rates and violence gave rise to the perception 'that the government had lost control of the country and that the growing anarchy had endangered the future of the white community.'⁷⁵ In April 1993, Chris Hani, the secretary-general of the Communist Party was assassinated – the group of perpetrators including a former member of the Conservative Party. Then in June, negotiators were forced to flee when the some three thousand members of the AWB stormed the venue with the rallying cry that 'we don't want Kaffirs in here. Kaffirs, we are going to shoot you dead today.'⁷⁶ Whilst these events exacerbated tensions, this in turn helped the African National Congress attain the agreement that the first democratic election be held on 27 April 1994, thereby imposing a rapidly approaching

⁶⁸ Welsh and Spence, *Ending Apartheid*, 127 and O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 410 – 411.

⁶⁹ Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 294 and Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 642. Also see A. Jeffery, *People's War: New Light on the Struggle for South Africa* (Jeppestown: Jonathan Ball Publishers, 2009) and S. Ellis and T. Sechaba, *Comrades against Apartheid: The ANC and the South African Communist in Exile* (London: James Currey, 1992).

⁷⁰ Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 640.

⁷¹ O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 411.

⁷² Giliomee, *The Afrikaners*, 643.

⁷³ Welsh and Spence, *Ending Apartheid*, 132 – 133. Referred to as the 'Minute of Understanding' in O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 412.

⁷⁴ O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 412.

⁷⁵ Van Rooyen, *Hard Right*, 206.

⁷⁶ Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 296 – 297.

deadline on the negotiations.⁷⁷ Essentially, by November 1993 negotiations had reached agreement and the interregnum segued into an interim constitution and peaceful democratic election in April 1994.⁷⁸

Essentially, South Africa's democratic transition was marked by violence and a high level of anxiety over the potential outbreak of a bloody civil war. During these two interregna – the intra-politicking of the weakening National Party in 1989 and the inter-politicking of the negotiation process – white South Africa endured a satanic panic between 1989 and 1993, to which this chapter now turns. The moral panic, as this chapter will show, articulated a myriad concerns from the dissolution of the communist threat to the decline of white hegemony in South Africa. Although, as explored in the previous chapter, there was a global climate of fear surrounding the satanic menace, during this period in white South Africa the threat of Satanism was articulated almost exclusively in terms of anarchy, rebellion and corruption. Indeed, it was alleged that all Satanists endeavoured 'to bring about complete chaos and anarchy' in South Africa.⁷⁹ The moral panic itself focussed around two closely intertwined threats: the 'New Age' and devil-worship. As this chapter will now demonstrate the focus rested on the white youth as vulnerable yet dangerous and, tellingly, as both victims and culprits.

'The seed of complete anarchy':⁸⁰ The Devil, the New Age and the Boere Blues

As fears of the satanic menace began to surface in the early months of 1989, so did anxiety over the Devil's modern familiar – that 'wolf in sheep's clothing' – the New Age movement.⁸¹ Amidst the growing popularity of the politicised rock music of the Voëlvry movement, it appeared that Eastern mysticism, transcendentalism and neo-paganism had swept over the geographic and cultural boundaries of white South Africa.⁸² New Age ranks were said to range from Satanists to yogis, witches, environmentalists, alien enthusiasts,

⁷⁷ Welsh and Spence, *Ending Apartheid*, 132 – 133 and Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 297.

⁷⁸ As well as the creation of a 'Government of National Unity' which incorporated all political parties that garnered more than five per cent of the vote. Barber, *South Africa in the Twentieth Century*, 297 and O'Meara, *Forty Lost Years*, 413.

⁷⁹ Gardiner and Gardiner, *Satanism*, 87.

⁸⁰ Baptist church minister and high school vice-principal, John Herbert, quoted in 'Peace or Protest: Church reactions to New Age', *Cross Times*, January 1990, 11. The 'Boereblues' from M. Waldner, 'Sinode nie lus vir ds. Jannie...se blik op Satan in die Boereblues', *Rapport*, 22 October 1989, 1.

⁸¹ 'Wolf in skaapklere', *Die Kerkbode*, 28 July 1989, 8.

⁸² See, for example, 'Mysticism big business in US', *The Cape Times*, 20 November 1989, 5 and 'London', *Sunday Times*, 21 May 1992, 23.

scientologists, human secularists, Buddhists and Hindus. Whilst its emergence went unnoticed by many South Africans,⁸³ warning reports sounded from the pages of Church newspapers, including those of the Dutch Reformed Church, *Die Kerkbode*.⁸⁴ Declared a danger to children and Christians, particularly the weak and the wavering, the New Age ‘cult’ was described as luring the naïve ‘hook, line and karma!’⁸⁵ As the threat of communism dissipated, many clergy and laymen believed that South Africa faced a new moral and spiritual onslaught in the form of the New Ager, whose aims matched those of the ‘anti-Christ’: a single world government, economy, culture and religion.⁸⁶ Indeed, the ‘partially satanic’ and ‘anti-Christian’ movement was being dispersed around the globe through popular culture and a network of ‘front organisations’ which included Greenpeace, The Hunger Project, the United Nations’ Unity and Diversity Council, and Amnesty International.⁸⁷ In South Africa, New Age organisations were reported to include the countercultural End Conscription Campaign and the Voëlvry movement.⁸⁸

Symbolised as much by the rainbow and the yin-yang as by the pentagram and the swastika, the New Age had infiltrated popular culture – from the *Star Wars* movies and Steven Spielberg’s *ET* (1982) to *The Smurfs*, *The Care Bears* and *Rainbow Bright*.⁸⁹ Decried as purveyors of the ‘anti-Christ’ by Christians, conservative and charismatic, 1989 saw the New

⁸³ In early 1990, several politicians, clergy, authors, academics and members of the public had not heard of the New Age or the disputes. ‘New Age: Or is it as old as man?’, *Cross Times*, January 1990, 11. Also see J. Yeld, ‘Old wisdoms, new holy “war”’, *The Argus*, 19 December 1989, 20.

⁸⁴ See, for example, ‘Die “New Age”-beweging: Wat is dit?’, *Wood en Daad*, April 1989, 3; ‘Misleidende “New Age Movement” ook in SA bedrywings’, *Die Kerkbode*, 7 July 1989, 6; ‘Wolf in skaapklere’, *Die Kerkbode*, 28 July 1989, 8; ‘Die reenboog is ketters’, *Die Suidwester*, 11 August 1989, 10; ‘Die Reenboog teken en die New Age Movement’, *Die Suidwester*, 18 August 1989, 4; ‘Die “New Age”-beweging’, *Die Kerkbode*, 27 September 1989, 7 and ‘New Age is ‘n gevaar vir die Christendom’, *Die Patriot*, 8 December 1989, 9.

⁸⁵ J. Gardiner, *The New Age Cult in South Africa* (Cape Town: Struikhof, 1991), 20.

⁸⁶ See, for example, ‘Die “New Age”-beweging: Wat is dit?’, *Wood en Daad*, April 1989, 3; ‘Misleidende “New Age Movement” ook in SA bedrywings’, *Die Kerkbode*, 7 July 1989, 6; ‘Expert probe into “evil” TV’, *Daily Dispatch*, 5 April 1989, 4; ‘Expert probe into “evil” TV’, *Daily Dispatch*, 5 April 1989, 4; ‘Vredespale is “vir eenheid in wereld”’, *Die Burger*, 16 November 1989, 3 and J. C. J. de Lange, ‘New Age aan die voorpunt’, *Die Transvaler*, 13 March 1992, 14.

⁸⁷ See, for example, M. Waldner, ‘Duiwel sit agter die tekens, se hulle – New Age, Halaal in die gedrang’, *Rapport*, 21 May 1989, 27; ‘Die New Age: Die gelowige het rede om dit te vrees’, *Die Afrikaanse*, 29 August 1990, 10; ‘Churchmen reject “New Age” gospel’, *The Citizen*, 7 February 1991, 13 and E. Hoon, ‘Vrouefokus: Weg met New Age’, *Die Patriot*, 27 August 1993, 13.

⁸⁸ S. Martin, ‘Teachings of new cult “are anti-Christian”’, *The Sunday Star*, 8 October 1989, 4; ‘Die “New Age”-beweging’, *Die Kerkbode*, 27 September 1989, 7 and ‘New Age is ‘n gevaar vir die Christendom’, *Die Patriot*, 8 December 1989, 9.

⁸⁹ See, for example, ‘We must smite the satanic Smurfs!’, *Sunday Times*, 10 September 1989, 7; ‘Die “New Age”-beweging’, *Die Kerkbode*, 27 September 1989, 7; L. F. Schulze, ‘Die “New Age” is hier’, *Die Kerkblad*, 25 September 1991, 30 and D. Pienaar, ‘Steek New Age by ons skole kop uit?’, *Die Kerkbode*, 6 August 1993, 8.

Age ‘heresy’ bemoaned with increasing hostility as a ‘curse’ on white South Africa.⁹⁰ Indeed, several companies fell under the suspicion of these moral watchdogs, including Volkskas bank and the South African Broadcasting Corporation whose logos were found to smack of ‘New Age’ influences.⁹¹ By late 1989, the popular culture enjoyed by South Africa’s white youth had come under heavy scrutiny: church ministers played Voëlvry records backwards on the premise that they were encoded with satanic messages,⁹² the SABC removed *Rainbow Bright* from its schedule,⁹³ and a science fiction society at Stellenbosch University was branded guilty of ‘dabbling in the occult.’⁹⁴ While public anxiety intensified with reports of devil worship among the youth, hostility towards the New Age resounded in several highly publicised campaigns against the occult in South Africa.

On account of widespread public concern, the Publications Board undertook a special investigation into the infiltration of occult and New Age symbols on television, particularly the entertainment directed towards children. Indeed, some church officials declared that ‘witches’ and ‘Satan’s forces’ had created these television programmes as part of the ‘massive onslaught’ on white society.⁹⁵ Consequently, by 1990, popular culture was literally undergoing a trial-by-fire. In the Eastern Cape, for example, a child plagued by nightmares was cured when his minister burned his possessed toys.⁹⁶ A more public trial was undertaken in 1990, with the planned burning of the ‘un-Christian, un-Godly, demonic’ Ninja Turtle toys in the small, seaside town of Hermanus.⁹⁷ Decried as ‘Satan’s turtles’,⁹⁸ the public bonfire was explained as an initiative to ‘keep South Africa clean.’⁹⁹ The attempt failed, however, when the local municipality stepped in at the last moment and insisted that a permit was required. The offending toys were buried in cement a few days later.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁰ ‘Honderde protester teen vredespale’, *Die Burger*, 13 November 1989, 2.

⁹¹ ‘New Age: Or is it as old as man?’, *Cross Times*, January 1990, 11. Also see S. Martin, ‘Teachings of new cult “are anti-Christian”’, *The Sunday Star*, 8 October 1989, 4.

⁹² I. Crews, ‘The rock ’n reverse dominee: Music men slam claim of ‘satanic’ backtrack’, *Sunday Times*, 24 September 1989, 13.

⁹³ ‘New Age: Or is it as old as man?’, *Cross Times*, January 1990, 11.

⁹⁴ J. Hillier, ‘NGK probes sci-fi group for “dabbling in the occult”’, *Sunday Times*, 17 September 1989, 4.

⁹⁵ Quoted in ‘Expert probe into “evil” TV’, *Daily Dispatch*, 5 April 1989, 4. Also see J. Gardiner and H. Gardiner, *How Safe is My Child? TV, Toys and the Occult in South Africa* (Capetown: Struikhof, 1991).

⁹⁶ Gardiner and Gardiner, *Satanism*, 113 – 114.

⁹⁷ Quoted in ‘Why angry clerics hurled “evil” Turtles into oblivion’, *Sunday Times*, 23 December 1990, 5.

⁹⁸ J. Taaljaard, ‘“Satan se skilpaaie” hier glad nie welkom’, *Rapport*, 11 November 1990.

⁹⁹ Quoted in ‘Why angry clerics hurled “evil” Turtles into oblivion’, *Sunday Times*, 23 December 1990, 5.

¹⁰⁰ ‘Ninja turtles to go up in smoke’, *The Citizen*, 17 December 1990, 8; ‘“Bose” speelgoed sal nou begrawe word’, *Oosterlig*, 19 December 1990, 2; ‘Why angry clerics hurled “evil” Turtles into oblivion’, *Sunday Times*, 23 December 1990, 5. The Ninja Turtles were also central to another series of complaints when they appeared on the cover of the Free State University’s student magazine. See P. De Blom, ‘Onmin steek sy kop uit oor

Meanwhile, the long castigated elements of ‘eastern mysticism and Satanism’¹⁰¹ in foreign rock music were located in the homespun music of the Voëlvry movement. Overtly anti-apartheid and anti-establishment, the Voëlvry tour – whose headline act was the Gereformeerde Blues Band – was besmirched by several members of the Dutch Reformed Church as disseminating ‘satanic and anti-Christian messages.’¹⁰² Inserting Voëlvry into the ‘musical onslaught of evil’ initiated by the Beatles and Pink Floyd, an article in *Die Kerkbode* condemned the alternative Afrikaans music as shamelessly attacking ‘the religion and constitutional values as given in the word of God.’¹⁰³ Indeed, one particularly adamant dominee, Jannie Malan, asserted that the Devil worked through these ‘evil satanic things as an assault on the human spirit.’¹⁰⁴ Malan insisted that the Voëlvry records had been insidiously coded with ‘satanic messages’ – one need only play the record backwards. In the months that followed churchmen and record producers, and the more self-consciously “alternative” youth as well, huddled around record players in an attempt to hear the ‘devil inspired messages’.¹⁰⁵ Charged with ‘blasphemy and undermining the youth of the country’, Voëlvry had already been banned from the campuses of several Afrikaans Universities, including Potchefstroom and Stellenbosch. Voëlvry tour manager and former journalist, Cathy Winter, noted that the official displeasure had actually fuelled the popularity of the concerts.¹⁰⁶ However, the record company took particular umbrage to Malan’s assertions and pursued a highly publicised lawsuit against the church moderator and *Die Kerkbode* in 1989 – demanding that Malan prove his claims or apologise.¹⁰⁷ Malan did neither, but by September 1991 the case had been dropped.¹⁰⁸

Turtle op joolblad’, *Die Volksblad*, 5 February 1991, 1. Links were also made between the occult, television and family murders in 1992. See A. Dodd, ‘Kazam! “Satanic” kids TV zapped’, *Weekly Mail*, 24 September 1992, 5.

¹⁰¹ See, for example, F. Esterhuyse, ‘Beware the “satanistic” pop music, NGK synod told’, *The Argus*, 17 October 1986, 1 and ‘Satanic music’, *The South African Observer*, May 1985, 12. In 1988, the Dutch Reformed Church undertook a commission (*Kommissie vir Leer en Aktuele Sake*) whose purview included the influence of the occult in South Africa, and once more the issue of popular music imbued with Eastern mysticism and Satanism came to the fore. H. Kolbe, ‘Duiwelaanbidding: moenie op loop gaan – Cilliers’, *Oosterlig*, 14 February 1989, 4.

¹⁰² A. James, “‘Voelvry’ backwards row for court”, *The Sunday Star*, 8 October 1989, 4.

¹⁰³ ‘Misleidende “New Age Movement” ook in SA bedrywig’, *Die Kerkbode*, 7 July 1989, 6. Also see ‘Musieklike ondermyning’, *Die Afrikaner*, 1 November 1989, 7.

¹⁰⁴ Quoted in I. Powell, ‘The backward theory of rock music’s “Satanic verses”’, *The Daily Mail*, 21 June 1990, 8.

¹⁰⁵ Quoted I. Crews, ‘The rock ’n reverse dominee: Music men slam claim of ‘satanic’ backtrack’, *Sunday Times*, 24 September 1989, 13.

¹⁰⁶ Some seventeen thousand people, mainly white Afrikaner youths, attended the twenty shows. A. James, “‘Voelvry’ backwards row for court”, *The Sunday Star*, 8 October 1989, 4.

¹⁰⁷ See, for example: ‘Dominee in die pekel oor Voelvry’, *Die Transvaler*, 3 October 1989, 2; M. Waldner, ‘Sindoe nie lus vir ds. Jannie...se blik op Satan in die Boereblues’, *Rapport*, 22 October 1989, 1; ‘Sinode luister na “yrvlëoV”’, *Die Kerkbode*, 27 October 1989, 4; A. van Zyl, ‘Record firm suing NGK moderator’, *The*

However, it was the planting of two aluminium ‘peace poles’ in South African soil that resulted in the religious showdown between conservative Christians and New Agers. An endeavour by the World Peace Through Prayer organisation, over sixty-one thousand ‘peace poles’ had been erected in cities across the world, including the Vatican City. Although the poles were inscribed with the words ‘may peace prevail’, conservative Christians were convinced that they were ‘demonic’ obelisks that sought to revive Babylonian sun worship.¹⁰⁹ Indeed, having already condemned the Voëlvry movement, Jannie Malan argued that the ‘peace poles’ formed part of the misleading disguise employed by the un-Christian New Age movement.¹¹⁰ Although already denied in Pretoria and Johannesburg, large because of complaints by the Conservative Party, two ‘peace poles’ were erected in the Cape Town area.¹¹¹ Declaring them an ‘evil’ imbued with the potential to bring ‘damnation down on the city’,¹¹² over a thousand Christians, armed with prayer and gospel songs, marched against the ‘demonic poles’.¹¹³ Soon the mayor of Cape Town, Gordon Oliver, became ensnared in the protest when he was accused of taking part both pagan sun worship and midnight rituals atop Table Mountain, where one of the ‘peace poles’ was planted.¹¹⁴ The protest gained Oliver the epithet of an eccentric, the ‘bridge-building’ mayor having asserted ‘the “Berlin Wall” is coming down in our hearts and in our city.’¹¹⁵ However, protesting Christian groups did not agree, and by early 1990 a petition against the ‘peace poles’ had attracted two thousand

Citizen, 24 November 1989, 8 and P. Terreblanche, ‘Dominee Jannie en Shifty kyk na skikking’, *Rapport*, 15 July 1990, 5.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Dominee skotvry’, *Die Transvaler*, 13 September 1991, 2; ‘Eis teen dr. Jannie Malan terugtrek’, *Beeld*, 14 September 1991, 2; P. Terreblanche, ‘Dr. Jannie en Shifty gaan skik’, *Rapport*, 15 September 1991, 8 and ‘Dr Malan skotvry’, *Die Kerkbode*, 11 October 1991, 12.

¹⁰⁹ J. Scott, ‘Let’s tie witches to these satanic peace poles’, *The Cape Times*, 13 November 1989, 6 and Gardiner, *The New Age Cult in South Africa*, 54. Also see ‘Vredespale sonde ondanks nuwe baadjie’, *Die Burger*, 22 September 1989, 20; E. J. Engelbrecht, ‘Die inplant van sogenaamde vredespale ’n herlewing van heidendom’, *Die Hervormer*, October 1989, 9 and ‘Vredespale is “vir eenheid in wêreld”’, *Die Burger*, 16 November 1989, 3.

¹¹⁰ L. Steffen, ‘Vredespale moet uit, sê Malan’, *Beeld*, 28 August 1989, 3; ‘Peace Pole planted despite objections’, *The Citizen*, 29 August 1989, 10; ‘“Vredespale” krap kerkmense om’, *Die Kerkbode*, 1 September 1989, 1 and ‘Proteste teen “vredes-pale”’, *Die Afrikaner*, 6 September 1989, 5.

¹¹¹ ‘CP In row over “unholy” peace poles’, *The Citizen*, 20 August 1989, 10; E. Waugh, ‘City denies “peace pole” allegations’, *Pretoria News*, 25 August 1989, 5 and ‘Nat-stadsraad skarrel oor “vredespaal”’, *Die Patriot*, 1 September 1989, 16.

¹¹² Quoted in ‘Mayor embroiled in religious “peace poles” row’, *The Cape Times*, 14 November 1989, 7.

¹¹³ ‘Christene wil opruk teen vredespale’, *Die Burger*, 10 November 1989, 1; ‘Pole of peace must go, pray Christians’, *The Cape Times*, 13 November 1989, 3; ‘Honderde protesteer teen vredespale’, *Die Burger*, 13 November 1989, 2; ‘“Demonic” pole protest’, *The Citizen*, 14 November 1989, 13; ‘Two religious groups have showdown’, *The Citizen*, 14 November 1989, 3; ‘“Peace poles” not Sun worship – organiser’, *The Citizen*, 15 November 1989, 8; ‘Protes teen vredespale’, *Die Kerkbode*, 17 November 1989, 1 and ‘Protest teen vredespale’, *Die Kerkblad*, 6 December 1989, 12.

¹¹⁴ A. Duggan, ‘Christians outraged by mayor’s mountain ritual’, *Sunday Times*, 19 November 1989, 13.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in A. Duggan, ‘Mayor fights for peace’, *Sunday Times*, 3 December 1989, 17. Also see Mayor: Objector’s to peace poles dogmatic’, *The Cape Times*, 17 January 1990, 5.

signatures.¹¹⁶ More sinisterly, or perhaps ironically, some New Agers reportedly received death threats and another's dog was killed.¹¹⁷ After petitions and lobbies failed to remove the poles,¹¹⁸ frustrated Christians hacked them down.¹¹⁹

The peace poles debacle was highly publicised and garnered reactions ranging from incredulity to irritation, as well as a public rebuke by the archbishop Desmond Tutu.¹²⁰ However, as one columnist scoffed, 'if there is one word that alerts the moral watchdogs of the nation, it is *peace*.'¹²¹ Occurring in an election year, the protest also gained the attention of the Conservative Party, who took the opportunity to lambaste the National Party for failing to combat the intrusion of the New Age. Indeed, the incident was used to declare that the National Party actually supported the 'satanic sects' of the New Age movement.¹²² Similar assessments were made in 'veld schools' – a school trip and 'rite of passage for white youths' during which they were taught to love nature and fear communists and the black majority.¹²³ In early 1989, a child recently returned from 'veld school' told the press that they had been taught about the encroaching threats of Satanism and Communism, that the African National Congress was un-Christian and that 'the devil could take us over'. Moreover, the only political parties that stood in a positive light were the Conservative Party and the AWB.¹²⁴ More specifically, however, the 'peace poles' protest disseminated concerns about the New Age and its links with Satanism. Indeed, convinced that the New Age movement was encroaching on the moral territory of Christianity, alarmist reports asserted that modern South African society was regressing. Morally, the country was becoming Babylon – 'a word

¹¹⁶ "Satanic" poles petition spreading', *The Cape Times*, 12 January 1990; 'Landwyte petisie opgestel teen vredespale', *Die Burger*, 15 January 1990, 5; 'Versoekskrif teen vredespale', *Die Kerkbode*, 19 January 1990, 1. Also see S. Sorour, 'City "peace pole" row with Administrator denied', *Weekend Argus*, 12 May 1990, 4; 'Controversy erupts over CT poles', *The Citizen*, 12 May 1990, 13 and H. Underhill, 'Meiring vs city: Row over Cape Town's "peace poles" escalates', *The Cape Times*, 12 May 1990, 1.

¹¹⁷ 'New Age or is it as old as man?', *Cross Times*, January 1990, 11.

¹¹⁸ 'Vredespale kan bly – stadsraad', *Die Burger*, 16 February 1990, 3.

¹¹⁹ 'Peace pole: Council promises legal action', *The Cape Times*, 29 March 1990, 3; 'Voor aftbreek van paal is gebid, hoor hof', *Die Burger*, 27 November 1990, 8; 'Berg mag nie verander word nie, hoor hof', *Die Burger*, 28 November 1990, 4 and 'Vredespaal-brekers gestraf', *Die Burger*, 30 November 1990, 3. The poles were not erected again. See 'Vredespale sal nie weer opgerig word', *Die Burger*, 14 February 1991, 8 and 'Tafelberg bly sonder vredespale', *Die Kerkbode*, 22 February 1991, 2.

¹²⁰ D. Caelers, 'Tutu decries break up of New Age prayer meetings', *The Cape Times*, 20 November 1989, 5.

¹²¹ J. Scott, 'Let's tie witches to these satanic peace poles', *The Cape Times*, 13 November 1989, 6.

¹²² See 'NP steun Satan-sekte: Betrokke in anti-Christelike aksie', *Die Afrikaander*, 9 August 1989, 1. Also see 'CP In row over "unholy" peace poles', *The Citizen*, 20 August 1989, 10; E. Waugh, 'City denies "peace pole" allegations', *Pretoria News*, 25 August 1989, 5 and 'Nat-stadsraad skarrel oor "vredespaal"', *Die Patriot*, 1 September 1989, 16.

¹²³ P. Vale, 'The Cold War and South Africa: Repetitions and Revisions on a Prolegomenon', in G. Baines and P. Vale, eds, *Beyond the Border War: New Perspectives on Southern Africa's Late-Cold War Conflicts* (South Africa: University of South Africa Press, 2008), 35.

¹²⁴ B. Adams, 'I was lucky...I knew when to stop listening', *Sunday Tribune*, 28 May 1989, 7.

that has become synonymous with evil, corruption and sexual licentiousness.’¹²⁵ If white society was returning to Babylon, the cause lay partly in the fact that its children worshipped at the altar of Mammon. Indeed, one Afrikaner columnist questioned whether the New Age was in fact preferable to the materialism of the modern Afrikaner.¹²⁶

Rising hostility, and media attention, towards the New Age also amplified fears of Satanism – the niche of devil worship into which the broad assortment of ‘New Age’ activities were inserted. Indeed, New Agers came ‘with satanic and demonic things’,¹²⁷ including the promulgation of androgyny, mysticism, globalisation and holism.¹²⁸ Anxieties over the New Age and devil worship were magnified by, and in turn accentuated, growing concern over white morality in general. Certainly, a survey conducted in 1990 showed that white attitudes towards morality had become more conservative than they had been ten years before.¹²⁹ In 1991, nearly a thousand churchmen gathered behind a document that warned of the ‘catastrophic consequences’ that would result from the continued degeneration of white morality in South Africa. Immorality, high divorce rates, homosexuality and lesbianism, as well as the uncensored violence on South African television were denoted as ‘factors promoting the general decay of the moral fibre of our society.’¹³⁰ While hostility towards the New Age movement was largely debated in the Afrikaans press and directed by conservative church officials, more widespread fears about the flourishing of Satanism erupted from rumour and sensationalist reports, both English and Afrikaans, across the country.

A game called ‘anarchy’:¹³¹ The Devil and the corruption of South Africa

Sensational and macabre, reports of the Devil and his children entered widespread circulation in 1989. Over the next four years, waves of reports across the country gravitated around similar elements of dark debauchery and sinful sedition by a clandestine cult of devil worshippers. Satanic conscripts in the South African Defence Force had been caught

¹²⁵ Gardiner, *The New Age Cult in South Africa*, 15.

¹²⁶ A. Van Niekerk, ‘Die kerk het die kunstenaars afgedank’, *Vrye Weekblad*, 9 November 1990, 19. Also see H. Tyson, ‘Our land is an altered State’, *The Star*, 7 October 1989, 10.

¹²⁷ J. Malan quoted in ‘The B-side’, *Financial Mail*, 11 August 1989, 51.

¹²⁸ ‘New Age or is it as old as man?’, *Cross Times*, January 1990, 11.

¹²⁹ The survey was undertaken by the Department of Education and Training. See M. Rose, ‘Sex: What SA’s youth thinks’, *YOU*, 11 April 1991, 96 – 97 and Administration, House of Assembly, *Care for Our Youth 2000* (Pretoria: Department of Education and Culture, c. 1990).

¹³⁰ Quoted in ‘Churchmen reject “New Age” gospel’, *The Citizen*, 7 February 1991, 13.

¹³¹ From ‘Devil cult: Shock report on city Satanism’, *The Cape Times*, 19 May 1990, 1.

‘committing obscene acts’, whilst a gang of drug-addicted teenage delinquents prone to spray-painting satanic graffiti (including a picture of the grim reaper) had reportedly named themselves the Kids in Satan’s Service (KISS).¹³² Dark rituals and perverse sexual orgies were rumoured to have occurred on beaches and in graveyards, attended by children and adults chained to the cult by drug addiction, fear, and blackmail.¹³³ Satanists had reportedly threatened investigators and church officials with ‘coded letters’ of ‘filth’, the word ‘hell’ had been scratched into a churchgoer’s car, and a confused teenager had been found with a revolver they had no memory of.¹³⁴ Tales became increasingly obscene as time passed: human sacrifice was common, cannibalism was rife, blood writ curses had been cast and demons summoned.¹³⁵ The Devil demanded absolute subservience from his followers. One sect allegedly required that its members be homosexual, a Cape Town cell made regular use of a male teenage prostitute for anal sex, while another directed its attentions towards the desecration of churches. All Satanists busied themselves ‘preying on children,’¹³⁶ indeed one outspoken police officer insisted that ‘Satanists don’t play gold on a Saturday. They kill children.’¹³⁷ By the turn of the decade Satanism was declared the ‘crime of the 1990s’¹³⁸ and was believed to have an intricate network of satanic cells hidden behind the ‘fanatical cover of secrecy.’¹³⁹ Self-confessed Satanists, albeit from behind the cover of anonymity, stroked the curiosity of the press with tales of grisly rituals, coffin fetishes and blood drinking that

¹³² ‘Devil worship in Ladysmith’, *The Natal Mercury*, 15 February 1989, 1 and ‘SADF men sent home after Satanism probe’, *The Cape Times*, 15 February 1989, 1.

¹³³ See, for example, D. Jones, ‘Saved from Satanism: Woman tells of her return to the real world’, *Daily Dispatch*, 19 April 1989, 3; C. van Rooyen, ‘Leraar bang hulle maak hom dood’, *Rapport*, 21 May 1989, 10; C. van Rooyen, ‘Ons ervarings met duiwelaanbidders’, *Rapport*, 21 May 1989, 10; ‘Ek het my eie bloed gedrink’, *Die Transvaler*, 15 June 1990, 3; J. Naran, ‘Churches to act on satan worship claims’, *The Leader*, 22 June 1990, 1; E. Pople and J. van Dyk, “‘Rasend gelukkig” in graf vol bene’, *Huisgenoot*, 14 November 1991, 8; C. Hurry, ‘Meet the Devil’s disciple’, *The Star*, 26 September 1992, 3; ‘Oud-Satanis vertel van mensoffers’, *Die Burger*, 18 September 1992, 3 and P. Simonis, ‘Ek was in geheim SA se hoof heks’, *Huisgenoot*, 23 April 1993, 10.

¹³⁴ ‘News of Satanists pours into police files’, *Weekend Post*, 12 August 1989, 8 and ‘Satanic worship in SA feared to be increasing’, *Pretoria News*, 14 August 1989, 4.

¹³⁵ See, for example, ‘Kinders dalk vermis deur Satanisme’, *Oosterlig*, 27 July 1989, 1; L. Isaas, ‘Is Gonubie SA’s Satanist headquarters?’, *Weekend Post*, 29 July 1989, 1; ‘Sataniste lok jonges: ‘Bewyse’ dat hul met grafte lol’, *Beeld*, 29 July 1989, 4; ‘Satanisme in O-Kaap: die bewyse’, *Oosterlig*, 21 July 1989, 1; ‘Cops lift veil on Satanism in PE’, *Weekend Post*, 5 August 1989, 1 and ‘Satan cult not to be scoffed at, say clergy’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 7 August 1989, 3.

¹³⁶ ‘Child and animal killings alleged in bizarre rituals’, *Weekend Argus*, 19 May 1990, 15. See, for example, ‘Talk on Satanism’, *Daily Dispatch*, 19 May 1992, 7; ‘Gays noem hulself “seuns van Satan”’, *Die Transvaler*, 22 September 1992 and ‘Homoseksuele sataniste glo in Bfn bedrywig’, *Die Volksblad*, 23 September 1992, 9. Also see N. Goldman and K. Jonker, *Youth and Satanism Exposed* (Port Elizabeth: Lion Life, 1990); Jonker, *Satanism Exposed* (1992) and Els and Jonker, *Satanism in South Africa* (2000).

¹³⁷ Quoted in L. Elliott, ‘New Agers no bloodsuckers, Capt Solms’, *The Cape Times*, 13 August 1991, 6.

¹³⁸ Made with reference to Satanism in the United States as well as in South Africa. R. Milne, ‘It’s the crime of the ‘90s – police’, *Weekend Argus*, 25 May 1990, 15.

¹³⁹ Police captain Leonard Solms quoted in ‘Devil Cult: Shock report on city Satanism’, *The Cape Times*, 19 May 1990, 1.

served to accentuate the dangers of the Satanic cult and its members. As one such Satanist admitted, ‘I have eaten the heart of a Christian many times – it’s like eating lamb. It gives us the power of the ultimate desecration.’¹⁴⁰ Articulated in terms of perversion and anarchy, Satanism was ‘spreading like a cancerous fire through our country.’¹⁴¹ Most vulnerable of all were South Africa’s white youth. Indeed, the first sign of the Devil’s grip was youthful rebellion.¹⁴²

Indeed, rumours of drug-doused parties dominated earlier reports of devil-worship, arousing debate over music and television as ‘tools of the devil’ rather than the reality of satanic worship itself.¹⁴³ Satan’s influence, like that of the New Age, was perceived as festering in the materialism of modern South Africa and disseminated by popular culture.¹⁴⁴ Such concern over a dissident youth and the deviant elements of popular culture merged in the trope of the ‘Satanic dabbler’ – the naive teenager teetering on the edge of the dangerous occult. These ‘dabblers’ tended to have posters of rock stars in their rooms, blaspheme with reckless abandon, have an obsession with the colour black, dye their hair, and were allegedly compelled to lose their virginity after watching occult films like *The Exorcist* (1973).¹⁴⁵ By

¹⁴⁰ Quoted in J. Maker, ‘Devil disciple told to kill son’, *The Sunday Star*, 20 May 1990, 13. Some ‘Satanists’ did not remain anonymous but relished the media attention, although their tales did not admit to crimes of murder and rape. See, for example, C. van Rooyen, ‘Lucifer behoortlik die duiwel in’, *Rapport*, 21 May 1989, 10; ‘Exorcism of a Satanist’, *YOU*, 3 October 1991, 122 – 125 and E. Parker and J. Van Dyk, ‘Satanist’s confess: Blood lust of the devil’s children’, *YOU*, 14 November 1991, 8 – 9, 13.

¹⁴¹ A. Viljoen, ‘Fighting fire with prayer’, *Servamus*, May 1991, 18 – 19 and, similarly, “‘Ouer moet waak teen leemte’”, *Oosterlig*, 21 March 1990, 5. A series of articles appeared in *Servamus*, the official magazine of the South African Police, including: M. Conradie, ‘Die G(g)od wat jy dien’, *Servamus*, June 1991, 13 and 29; M. Conradie, ‘Roepstem uit die hel...’, *Servamus*, July 1991, 14 – 15; M. Conradie, ‘So offer ek my lewe...’, *Servamus*, August 1991, 46 and M. Conradie, ‘Ontsnapping uit die hel...’, *Servamus*, September 1991, 52 – 54.

¹⁴² See, for example, S. Kemp, ‘Movement to Christ stronger – Pastor’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 3 August 1989, 6; ‘Satan worship: focus falls on rock music’, *Weekend Post*, 5 August 1989, 4; ‘Tiener in greep van Satanisme’, *Oosterlig*, 7 August 1989, 1; ‘Kommer oor kinders en Satanisme’, *Die Transvaler*, 18 August 1989, 2; ‘Demone het haar beheer, vertel meisie’, *Oosterlig*, 25 August 1989, 1; ‘Teenager warns of satanic dangers’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 25 August 1989, 11; ‘Satanism in schools rife – teenager’, *Weekend Post*, 26 August 1989, 9 and ‘Pastor’s horror claim of Satanism in Natal’, *The Daily News*, 28 October 1989, 4.

¹⁴³ ‘Satan worship: focus falls on rock music’, *Weekend Post*, 5 August 1989, 4. Also see Y. Hoeksma, ‘Sataniese era beplan vir SA’, *Die Volksblad*, 21 August 1990, 1 and ‘How to tell if your child is a satanist – Potential danger signs leave a tell-tale trail’, *Weekend Post*, 20 April 1991, 11.

¹⁴⁴ Such sentiments also expressed a wariness of English permissiveness and materialism, with reports noting that ‘yuppie’ school children were most involved. See, for example, “‘Sommige kinders meer ure voor TV as in die skool’”, *Oosterlig*, 30 August 1990, 3; ‘How to tell if your child is a Satanist – Potential danger signs leave a tell-tale trail’, *Weekend Post*, 20 April 1991, 11. Also see, for example, “‘Glassy-glassy” hooks two PE schoolgirls to Satanism’”, *Eastern Province Herald*, 7 August 1990, 3; ‘Satanism evident in EL house’, *Daily Dispatch*, 10 August 1989, 1 and ‘Seun beland in hospital na lesing oor Satanisme’, *Tempo*, 27 October 1989, 1.

¹⁴⁵ ‘Cops life veil on Satanism in PE’, *Weekend Post*, 5 August 1989, 1; “‘Glassy-glassy” hooks two PE schoolgirls in Satanism’”, *Eastern Province Herald*, 7 August 1989, 3; ‘News of Satanists pours into police files’, *Weekend Post*, 12 August 1989, 8; ‘Satanism in schools rife – teenager’, *Weekend Post*, 26 August 1989, 9; C. Reilly, “‘Signs” of Satanism pinpointed’”, *Pretoria News*, 13 June 1990, 1; ‘So swig die tieners voor

1993, concern over ‘Satanic dabblers’ – or ‘CNA Satanists’ – had led to the condemnation of black clothing, Dungeons and Dragons, and Stephen King novels.¹⁴⁶ This image of the white child corrupted by Satanism was typified by the oft repeated, and distorted, story of the ‘all-black house’ in Eastern Province newspapers. Believed to be a satanic lair, the black-walled house’s devilish decor included a swastika, a pentagram, black candles and figurines of Egyptian gods. Raided by police, the lead detective and self-styled expert in the occult, Kobus Jonker, claimed to have discovered still more grisly evidence of the occult: a picture of a suicidal teenager in hospital after slashing her wrists, a cassette tape with the Lord’s Prayer written backwards, and a sixteen (or sometimes ten) year old girl who had ‘sold her soul to the devil’.¹⁴⁷

Lured into the devil’s grasp, children were forced to partake in bloody rituals, entice their friends into the cult, and distance themselves from those who might help. Speaking out against Satanism in the country, the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok deemed it ‘a crime against mankind.’ Indeed, Vlok continued, ‘[o]nce someone is entangled in this horrible web of agony, fear and violence, there is no escape.’¹⁴⁸ Children embedded in Satan’s web were allegedly drugged, sexually assaulted and forced to take part in devilish rituals that included sodomy, bestiality and cannibalism. Corrupted and perverted, rebellious satanic children were themselves victims of Satanism. Indeed, ‘beautiful girls become pale, their eyes are sunken and they become filled with hate.’¹⁴⁹ As one ‘saved’ Satanist admitted, ‘[t]hey named me Sex Demon and the boys in the coven were allowed to do whatever they wanted with me. They did everything.’¹⁵⁰ Consequently, suicide and Satanism were closely

Satanisme’, *Die Volksblad*, 26 July 1990, 14 and H. Schlenther, ‘Kinders al meer betrokke by die okkulte’, *Die Transvaler*, 10 December 1990, 7.

¹⁴⁶ See, for example, A. Kleynhans, ‘Satanisme het sielkundige gevolge’, *Tempo*, 7 March 1991, 5; W. Pretorius, ‘Duiwel verdryf uit kinderreeks’, *Die Burger*, 11 September 1992, 1; ‘Satanisme: So kan jy jou kind beskerm’, *Die Burger*, 16 September 1992, 7; H. van der Merwe, ‘As kinders swart dra’, *Die Transvaler*, 24 September 1992, 9; N. Jackson, ‘New Age en Dracula op skool laat hul kla’, *Beeld*, 7 May 1993, 5; D. Simon, ‘Stephen King novels “satanic”’, *The Cape Times*, 4 June 1993; T. Hutcheons, “‘Luister krities na musiek met kort, herhalende tema”’, *Die Volksblad*, 16 June 1993, 4; ‘Onderwysers moet bedag wees op tekens wat op Satanisme by kinders dui’, *Die Kerkbode*, 11 June, 1993, 1 and N. Dedekind, ‘Leerlinge ingelig oor satanisme’, *Die Volksblad*, 17 June 1992, 13.

¹⁴⁷ W. Kemp, ‘Skokverhaal van twee skoolmeisie-Sataniste’, *Oosterlig*, 3 April 1990, 1; J. Nel, ‘Detective and pastor join war on Satanism’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 20 April 1990, 5; ‘East London said to be Satanist headquarters’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 10 May 1990, 6; ‘Satanist headquarters traced to EL – report’, *Daily Dispatch*, 10 May 1990, 7; ‘All-black house reveals secrets of Satanism’, *The Sunday Star*, 20 May 1990, 13 and ‘EL seen as the top Satan centre’, *Evening Post*, 21 May 1990, 3.

¹⁴⁸ Adriaan Vlok quoted in ‘Vlok warns of drugs, satan and communism’, *The Natal Mercury*, 2 July 1990, 3.

¹⁴⁹ Quoted in ‘How to tell if your child is a satanist’, *Weekend Post*, 20 April 1991, 11.

¹⁵⁰ Quoted in C. Bisseker, ‘Two Fish Hoek teenagers describe Satanist orgies’, *The Cape Times*, 21 September 1992, 7.

associated. As one reverend of warned: '[m]any children are absolutely overcome with fear and are contemplating suicide because they are being brainwashed by Satanists into believing that once they are in, they can never turn around.'¹⁵¹

Amplifying the general anxiety regarding the moral resolve of the youth, a key concern revolved around the type of social environment that was allowing Satanism to flourish. Pornography, paedophilia, drug addiction and venereal diseases were linked to Satanism, so were abortion were homosexuality, rock music and television. Already occupying the liminal space between the innocence of childhood and the culpability of adulthood, teenagers were perceived as particularly vulnerable to corruption.¹⁵² While children from broken homes were deemed especially vulnerable to satanic influences, it was those children prone to rebellion who were at particular risk to this social threat. As the head of the Police Child Protection Unit in Cape Town, Leonard Solms, claimed, it was children who played the 'anarchy' game that were the easiest targets for Satanists.¹⁵³ However, '[w]hat is deeply disturbing,' one reverend noted, 'are the number of unscrupulous people who prey on the young and ritually abuse them.'¹⁵⁴ Essentially, rebellious satanic children taking part in rituals and committing obscene acts were themselves victims of Satanism. Hostility towards Satanism thus gravitated around the image of vulnerable and corrupted children who now posed a threat to the health of white society on the one hand, and the manipulative satanic adults who perverted children and morality on the other. Indeed, according to reports, it was the adult high priest who led the sacrificial rituals, who slit the throats of squalling white babies, who blackmailed the young members, and who knelt upon bended knee to pray for the downfall of South Africa.¹⁵⁵ Furthermore, these adults allegedly occupied positions of power and influence. As the oft recited claim of one anonymous Satanist read: '[m]y high priest is a man of standing and is

¹⁵¹ Quoted in 'Girls feared in grip of Satanic cult', *The Sunday Star*, 20 September 1992, 6.

¹⁵² J. Mulligan and S. Bartlett, 'Devil "had hold in local schools"', *Evening Post*, 22 May 1990, 2.

¹⁵³ 'Devil Cult: Shock report on city Satanism', *The Cape Times*, 19 May 1990, 1; P. Claasen, 'Satanisme: "wit babas in rituele geoffer"', *Die Burger*, 19 May 1990, 1 and C. Reilly, "'Signs of satanism pinpointed'", *Pretoria News*, 13 June 1990, 1.

¹⁵⁴ Quoted in 'The younger the better for the devil', *The Star*, 25 September 1992, 17.

¹⁵⁵ See, for example, J. Nel, 'Detective and pastor join war on Satanism', *Eastern Province Herald*, 20 April 1990, 5; J. Maker, 'Satanism shocker as devil-worship spreads', *Weekend Argus*, 9 May 1990, 15; 'Child and animal killings alleged in bizarre rituals', *Weekend Argus*, 19 May 1990, 15; 'Devil Cult: Shock report on city Satanism', *The Cape Times*, 19 May 1990, 1; P. Claasen, 'Satanisme: "wit babas in rituele geoffer"', *Die Burger*, 19 May 1990, 1; A. van Greunen, "'Babas geoffer aan Satan'", *Rapport*, 20 May 1990, 2; J. Maker, 'Devil disciple told to kill son', *The Sunday Star*, 20 May 1990, 13; A. Duggan, 'Satanic ring "killed babies"', *Sunday Times*, 20 May 1990, 1; M. McGhee, 'Devil worship is countrywide, claims churchman', *The Citizen*, 22 May 1990, 15 and S. Bartlett, "'May PE kids in Satanism'", *Evening Post*, 22 May 1990, 1.

known countrywide. If his identity was revealed it would shock the whole country. People from all professions – doctors, lawyers, teachers and housewives – are Satanists.’¹⁵⁶

Consequently, increasingly alarmed calls were made for the government to outlaw devil worship and tear away the ‘sinister veil of secrecy’.¹⁵⁷ Such hostility became increasingly urgent as tales of the devil’s minions claimed that ‘schoolchildren have become the main target for Satanists who use various tactics to draw them into their net of evil.’¹⁵⁸ As a result of demands for ‘this evil must be rooted out at any cost’,¹⁵⁹ an official police investigation was launched into the ‘diabolical phenomenon’.¹⁶⁰ Various organisations, societies, public figures and self-claimed experts had responded to, and shaped, this growing fear and hostility towards the satanic menace. In 1989, several organisations across South Africa, including the Transvaal Afrikaans Parents Association and the Concerned Christian Women in the Eastern Cape, became convinced that Satanism was rife in schools across the country – and the press followed suit.¹⁶¹ Indeed, by August that year, the Minister of Education and Culture, P. J. Clase, was prompted to reaffirm the department’s determination to protect children from ‘anti-Christian behaviour’ and instil sound moral values in the youth.¹⁶² Similar sentiments about the welfare of the youth and South African morality were expressed by the Health and Welfare Minister, C. J. April, when he asserted that decadent values and sick sexual practices in South African society were undermining the development of the youth.¹⁶³ Likewise, Rina Venter, the Minister of National Health, noted that the ascendance of Satanism was a cause of ‘grave concern’ and closely associated with the problems of drug and alcohol abuse among teenagers.¹⁶⁴ In response to widespread public concern, the Department of Education

¹⁵⁶ See, for example, J. Maker, ‘Devil disciple told to kill son’, *The Sunday Star*, 20 May 1990, 13; J. Maker, ‘PE Satanist: I ate human flesh’, *Evening Post*, 21 May 1990, 1; ‘Satanism is reality to be confronted’, *Evening Post*, 22 May 1990, 2; C. le Grange, ‘Expert allays some Satanism fears’, *The Star*, 28 May 1990, 11; R. Hattingh, ‘The quest for Satan’, *Vrye Weekblad*, 2 May 1991, 22 and “‘In most sects it’s the rule to sacrifice humans”’, *Sunday Tribune*, 10 June 1990, 2. Similar claims are made in Gardiner and Gardiner, *Satanism*, 24.

¹⁵⁷ ‘Satanism is a reality to be confronted’, *Evening Post*, 22 May 1990, 2.

¹⁵⁸ ‘Cult targets schoolkids’, *Weekend Argus*, 26 May 1990, 15.

¹⁵⁹ ‘Move to probe Satanism is a welcome step’, *Evening Post*, 14 June 1990, 2.

¹⁶⁰ ‘Top cop to probe Satanism’, *The Cape Times*, 13 June 1990, 1 and ‘Move to probe Satanism is welcome step’, *Evening Post*, 14 June 1990, 2.

¹⁶¹ Transvaalse Afrikaanse Ouer vereniging (TAO). See ‘Kommer oor kinders en Satanisme’, *Die Transvaler*, 18 August 1989, 2 and S. Kemp, ‘Movement to Christ Stronger – Pastor’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 3 August 1989, 6.

¹⁶² ‘Devil worship probe in schools’, *Pretoria News*, 16 August 1989, 1 and ‘Satanic pupils cured – Clase’, *The Citizen*, 15 August 1989, 4.

¹⁶³ ‘Cape Town worst city for boys abuse’, *The Cape Times*, 18 May 1990, 1.

¹⁶⁴ ‘Satanism prevalent, warns Rina Venter’, *Pretoria News*, 31 October 1990, 3; T. Stirling, ‘Venter warns youth on permissiveness’, *The Citizen*, 31 October 1990, 11 and ‘Rina Venter hits out at drug abuse and Satanism’, *The Daily News*, 31 October 1990, 3.

launched an official investigation into the issues facing white South Africa's youth, and the extent to which the occult had infiltrated children's literature.¹⁶⁵ A number of societies had also evolved to tackle the emergent social problem of Satanism, including the Concerned Christians Against Satanism, Folks Against Drug Abuse and the Parents of Rebellious Children Support Group.¹⁶⁶ As the latter asserted, Satanism 'is often regarded as a closet problem by parents enduring great anguish and heartache; there is no question that thousands are in a state of great trauma.'¹⁶⁷ However, reports of satanic activities, indeed conspiracies, were dismissed as 'pure speculation' by official police investigations, which could yield nothing to substantiate claims of devil worship in the country.¹⁶⁸ Likewise, an academic symposium on the subject noted that 'on the available evidence, as opposed to hysteria, the current wave of concern with Satanism among certain schools and churches is out of all proportion to the problem.'¹⁶⁹

Fear and hostility towards Satanism climaxed, but did not dissipate, in 1991 with what was soon dubbed a case of 'national hysteria'. As rumours and reports continued to circulate, hundreds of South African parents were moved to almost hysterical concern in the days leading up to the end of April 1991. With increasing intensity it was reported that the children of Lucifer were on the prowl, hunting for victims to place upon their sacrificial altars. Walpurgis Night – the Witches' Sabbath – was approaching and come midnight, when April turned to May, the blood of their quarry would be spilled.¹⁷⁰ By 1991, it was well established that the Devil and his ilk wanted children. He wanted to take them, pervert them, and consume them – and he was using white South Africans to do it. Children were purportedly receiving phone calls from strangers who invited them to deserted areas, a suspicious white

¹⁶⁵ See Administration: House of Assembly, *Care For Our Youth 2000* (Pretoria: Department of Education and Culture, c. 1990); Administration: House of Assembly, *Satanism and Occultism: section 1 – Guide for Principals and Teachers* (Pretoria: Transvaal Education Department, 1992) and Administration: House of Assembly, *Report of the Committee Investigating Satanism and Occultism in Children's Literature – Guidelines for Language Teachers* (Pretoria: Transvaal Education Department, 1992).

¹⁶⁶ 'War on Satan: Expose it! Stop it! Christians launch crusade to help those caught in devil's web', *Sunday Tribune*, 10 June 1990, 2; 'Satan worship shock', *The Leader*, 15 June 1990, 1; 'Rina Venter hits out at drug abuse and Satanism', *The Daily News*, 31 October 1990, 3 and C. King, 'Parent help group goes nationwide', *The Cape Times*, 6 October 1990, 20.

¹⁶⁷ Quoted in C. King, 'Parent help group goes nationwide', *The Cape Times*, 6 October 1990, 20.

¹⁶⁸ 'Police dismiss talk of Satanism', *The Natal Witness*, 9 August 1990, 3; 'Police probe Satanism', *The Cape Times*, 22 August 1990, 3 and C. Kotze and M. Nicolson, 'Police can't confirm "Satanist grave sites" report', *The Star*, 22 August 1990, 2.

¹⁶⁹ S. Coan, 'Satanism: looking beyond the sensationalism and hysteria', *The Natal Witness*, 1 November 1990, 9.

¹⁷⁰ Walpurgis Night (Walpurgisnacht), also known as the Witches Sabbath or the Satanic New Year, is believed to be a special night for witches on 30 April (the eve of May) on which they gather to dance, perform rituals and have orgiastic sex.

minivan had been spotted trolling the streets of various residential areas and school districts, and rumours of missing school children were rife.¹⁷¹

Although newspapers had reported that Satanism was a predominantly white problem, in 1991 racial lines limited neither the rumours nor the fear.¹⁷² In Port Elizabeth, a pupil of Malabar Primary School claimed to have been chased by a white minivan with the words ‘happy birthday children’ printed on the side, as did two teenage girls from the white suburb of Forest Hill. A similar story was told by a Gelvandale student, who reported that he was lured to the bus by a white man and woman who then tried to abduct him. He explained that his school shirt had been torn when he managed to fight off his abductors, during which he also knocked the wig off the woman’s head to reveal a man in drag.¹⁷³ Such stories also circulated in the Cape Town area. With the rumoured sightings of a white ‘bakkie’ and black car trailing children around the Bellville area rife, a number of parents requested that sport and after school activities be cancelled over the ‘Satanic Holiday’. By the end of April, police departments, newspaper offices, and school principals were inundated with phone calls seeking reassurance or confirmation of rumours, as well as purported sightings of Satanists kidnapping and abusing children at local malls.¹⁷⁴ Heightened concern and anxiety became hysteria. In northern Port Elizabeth, parents – armed with knives and grim determination – stormed school halls and removed their children from their classrooms. In several areas, coalitions of parents and plainclothes police officers patrolled the streets, vigilant for any sign of suspicious behaviour.¹⁷⁵ Several schools in the Western Cape kept students locked safely behind school gates and, like schools in East London, advised children to travel in large groups.¹⁷⁶ Throughout the country schools reported exceptionally low attendance rates with hundreds of children kept at home.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷¹ ‘Fears of Satanism keep children away from school’, *The Star*, 1 May 1991, 5.

¹⁷² It was repeatedly claimed that Satanism was predominantly white problem. Kobus Jonker, Interview by author. Digital Recording. Pretoria, 26 August 2010. Also see, for example, ‘Satanists meeting in city’, *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 27 August 1990, 1; P. Candido, ‘Satanism goes on rampage’, *The Star*, 20 April 1991; D. Caelers, ‘Devil moon glowing over SA’, *Weekend Argus*, 16 July 1992, 6 and B. Streek, ‘City teenagers “know Satanists”’, *The Cape Times*, 2 December 1992, 1. When the issue of Satanism emerged in newspapers with a largely African readership, it was described as imported by white people and uncommon among black people. See S. Temba, ‘Satanists look for kids to sacrifice’, *City Press*, 21 April 1991, 12.

¹⁷³ A. Goldstuck, ‘Satanic secret of the Birthday bus’, *Weekly Mail*, 3 – 9 May 1991, 5.

¹⁷⁴ ‘Landweye histerie by skole oor Satanisme’, *Die Burger*, 1 May 1991, 1.

¹⁷⁵ D. Derry and K. Patton, ‘Satanism Panic hits PE Schools’, *Evening Post*, 25 April 1991, 1; M. Papayya, ‘Police to step up school patrols on Satanic occasion’, *The Natal Witness*, 30 April 1991, 1 and ‘Fears of Satanism keep children away from school’, *The Star*, 1 May 1991, 5.

¹⁷⁶ ‘Landweye histerie by skole oor Satanisme’, *Die Burger*, 1 May 1991, 1.

¹⁷⁷ D. Derry and K. Patton, ‘Satanism Panic hits PE Schools’, *Evening Post*, 25 April 1991, 1; ‘Fears of Satanism keep children away from school’, *The Star*, 1 May 1991, 5; ‘Landweye histerie by skole oor

April ended, the first day of May passed and a ‘bemused calm’ replaced the anxiety.¹⁷⁸ Warnings from individual police and state officers grew silent. Action from police headquarters in Pretoria had been quick: a ‘gag order’ placed on police officers that had been speaking to the press and exacerbating concern over alleged satanic activities. Police spokesmen categorically stated that no evidence had been found to substantiate the claims of child abduction and satanic activity.¹⁷⁹ Indeed, the Gelvandale kidnap proved particularly fallacious when it was discovered that the boy had torn his shirt stealing guavas from a nearby neighbourhood.¹⁸⁰ As such, it was with some sober retrospect that newspapers could report only a curious incident of national hysteria in South Africa.¹⁸¹

‘The Hound of God’: The Devil and the Detective

Allegations of the children of Lucifer continued to flourish in newspapers across South Africa, although they were momentarily stilled by the gagging of outspoken ‘cult cops’ Leonard Solms in Cape Town and Kobus Jonker in the Eastern Cape. In lieu of this ‘gag order’, Solms nonchalantly rebutted that he would continue his investigation in his spare time where ‘no-one can point a finger at me.’¹⁸² However, while the gagging eclipsed the figure of Solms, and earmarked him as the Satanist ‘fundi’, it marked the ascendance of Jonker’s career as ‘God’s detective’.¹⁸³ Several months after the anti-climactic Walpurgis Night of 1991, Jonker and his officers finally found some evidence of Satanism in South Africa, albeit in the form of teenage satanic dabblers, a few condoms and a dagga pipe.¹⁸⁴ More substantial proof came just a few months later when the ‘initiation headquarters of the Satanist movement in the Eastern Cape’ were found in the undercarriage of the Van Staden’s bridge near Port Elizabeth. In addition to a black wooden cross nailed to the wall and pentagram

Satanisme’, *Die Burger*, 1 May 1991, 1 and A. Goldstuck, ‘Satanic secret of the Birthday bus’, *Weekly Mail*, 3 – 9 May 1991, 5.

¹⁷⁸ A. Goldstuck, ‘Satanic secret of the Birthday bus’, *Weekly Mail*, 3 – 9 May 1991, 5.

¹⁷⁹ ‘Gag on 2nd Satanism expert’, *Weekend Post*, 22 June 1991, 2 and ‘Satanism: Gags and Secrecy’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 25 June 1991, 8.

¹⁸⁰ A. Goldstuck, ‘Satanic secret of the Birthday bus’, *Weekly Mail*, 3 – 9 May 1991, 5.

¹⁸¹ See ‘Landwey histerie by skole oor Satanisme’, *Die Burger*, 1 May 1991, 1; ‘Geen gru-moord na Satansnag in Kaap ontdek’, *Die Burger*, 2 May 1991, 1 and A. Goldstuck, ‘Satanic secret of the Birthday bus’, *Weekly Mail*, 3 – 9 May 1991, 5.

¹⁸² Quoted in ‘Gag on 2nd Satanism expert’, *Weekend Post*, 22 June 1991, 2.

¹⁸³ Kobus Jonker, Interview by author. Digital Recording. Pretoria, 26 August 2010.

¹⁸⁴ S. Bartleh, ‘Police arrest PE Satanists’, *Evening Post*, 31 October 1991, 1; H. Hoffman, ‘SAP slaan toe op Sataniste in PE’, *Oosterlig*, 1 November 1991, 1; ‘Skulls, black angel found in swoop on coven’, *The Star*, 1 November, 1 and T. Mackie, ‘Biggest Satanism haul months after gagging’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 1 November 1991, 2.

painted on the floor, the satanic lair was announced by the words ‘Satan is lord’ and ‘Shut up and suffer’ spray-painted in red, to symbolise blood.¹⁸⁵ Similar findings were soon reported elsewhere. A ‘Satanic den’ in Johannesburg was discovered in the skeleton of an old mansion, partially burnt and demolished, where handprints of red paint ‘had been dragged down the wall in a silent scream.’ The word ‘Natasha’ had also been spray painted which, Jonker explained, was ‘Satan’ written backwards.¹⁸⁶ In Durban, a ‘filthy’ satanic hideout was found in a rundown house frequented by drug addicts. It too was besmeared with red satanic graffiti – a picture of a devil and a thorn-crowned Jesus, as well as the names of several heavy metal groups.¹⁸⁷ The abilities of Jonker, or ‘Colonel Ghostbuster’, to combat Satanism were also signified, reports suggested, by the alleged endeavours of Satanists to curse the police detective. As a target he was ‘a real favourite’ for spells that required the beheading or skinning of animals, but had allegedly received numerous verbal death threats.¹⁸⁸ Such publicised successes together with on-going concern over Satanism eventually led to the creation of the Occult Related Crimes Unit in the South African Police force, necessitating Jonker’s move from the Eastern Cape to Pretoria where he headed the small unit. From here, Jonker enjoyed a government-sanctioned platform from which to launch awareness campaigns involving public talks, educational seminars at schools, and the distribution of pamphlets regarding the dangers of Satanism.¹⁸⁹

Apprehension over the Devil’s purchase on white South Africa’s morality and children gradually subsided towards the end of 1993. In the miasma of public scrutiny for all signs of the devil, several companies tread carefully: the Shell petrol company removed ‘glider balls’ from their shelves when the promotional toy eyeball was deemed too satanic for children, while broadcasters were forced to monitor programmes for ‘satanic’ symbols like the yin-

¹⁸⁵ T. Mackie and J. Nel, ‘Satanism movement’s initiation HQ found’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 5 March 1992, 1; P. Candido, ‘Into the Cave of Satan: Coven found deep in bowels of Van Staden’s Bridge near PE’, *Weekend Argus*, 7 March 1992, 6 and S. Burri, ‘Sataniste se sel gekry in OP-brug’, *Oosterlig*, 5 March 1992, 1.

¹⁸⁶ B. Wilkinson, ‘Chilling visit to Reef satanist’s den’, *The Star*, 23 September 1992, 1. Also see A. van der Westhuizen, ‘Satanisme aan die Rand is skrikwekkend hoog’, *Beeld*, 24 September 1992, 4.

¹⁸⁷ A. Jurgens, ‘The Devils of Malvern’, *The Daily News*, 2 December 1992, 1.

¹⁸⁸ J. Maker, ‘Satanists warn policemen’, *Weekend Argus*, 26 May 1990, 15; M. van Rooyen, “‘Onsigbare bese ges” treiter leerkrag, leerlinge’, *Die Volksblad*, 11 August 1992, 1; C. Bisseker, ‘Two Fish Hoek teenagers describe Satanist orgies’, *The Cape Times*, 21 September, 7; P. Joubert, ‘Op die spoor van die duiwel’, *Vrye Weekblad*, 1 October 1992, 19 and A. Stofberg, ‘Dit het met kaal meisie begin’, *Beeld*, 18 November 1992, 9. Also see E. Abrahams, ‘Satanists scare us says top cop’, *Sunday Times*, 3 June 1990, 11.

¹⁸⁹ See, for example, ‘Talk on Satanism’, *Daily Dispatch*, 19 May 1993, 7; G. Knowler, ‘The SAP’s newest unit has devil of a job’, *The Star*, 30 October 1993, 10; ‘Police unit to “curb” the occult’, *The Cape Times*, 30 October 1993, 4; G. Knowler, ‘At war with Satan – Elite unit to combat the forces of evil’, *Natal on Saturday*, 30 October 1993, 6; P. de Bruin, ‘Satanisme neem toe in Tvl’, *Beeld*, 9 October 1993, 11 and P. de Bruin, ‘Sataniste se donker rituele in ‘n feestyd vol lig’, *Die Volksblad*, 29 December 1993, 7.

yang sign.¹⁹⁰ Meanwhile, echoes of the same alarm over Satanism among school children continued to reverberate around the country, particularly the Cape and the Transvaal,¹⁹¹ while another Afrikaner music group was slammed for being lascivious and satanic.¹⁹² Having erupted in 1989, satanic-related panic had receded by the end of 1993. Although the church and moral entrepreneurs would continue to fight the Devil and his influences, they did so with considerably less attention from the South African public and the state.

The Unholy Trinity: Interpreting the Moral Panic, 1989 – 1993

Marking a period of moral panic in white South Africa, between 1989 and 1993 the Devil accrued a considerable amount of public attention and concern. Indeed, continued calls to guard against the intertwined threats of Satanism and the New Age movement saw many white South Africans declare war against the Devil and his followers. Although regularly disputed and denied,¹⁹³ distorted and exaggerated tales of Devil's influence in South Africa caused considerable agitation and debate which resulted in the creation of several societies, reports, protests and eventually a specialised police task force. Occurring in waves of reports and rumour, this moral panic also engendered a powerful folk devil in the threat of the white Satanist. A polymorphous figure, the Satanic deviant straddled the image of the teenager

¹⁹⁰ See, for example, 'Surprise withdrawal of "Glider Balls"', *The Daily News*, 15 April 1992, 5; 'Company withdraws "satanic" glider balls', *The Star*, 15 April 1992; W. Pretorius, 'Duiwel verdryf uit kinderreekse', *Die Burger*, 11 September 1992, 1; A. Dodd, 'Kazam! "Satanic" kids TV zapped', *Weekly Mail*, 24 September 1992, 5 and 'Yin, yang and M-Net', *Weekly Mail*, 24 September 1992, 16.

¹⁹¹ I. Amla, "'Radically alternative religion" gaining ground in city', *The Natal Witness*, 5 April 1993, 9; D. Caelers, 'Devil moon glowing over SA', *Weekend Argus*, 18 July 1992, 6; 'Police go after Satan in Tygerberg', *The Cape Times*, 10 September 1992, 3; "'Satanisme" het tonge los in Tygerberg', *Die Burger*, 16 September 1992, 1; 'Kaapse leraar kry baie oproepe oor Satanisme', *Die Burger*, 17 September 1992, 7; B. Wilkinson, 'Satanist covens in northern suburbs', *The Star*, 18 September 1992, 1; H. Geldenhuys, 'Devil worship and sex orgies', *Weekend Argus*, 19 September 1992, 7; M. Stansfield, 'Breeding babies for human sacrifice', *Weekend Argus*, 19 September 1992, 7; M. Stansfield, 'Sexy little number was a little devil', *The Sunday Star*, 20 September 1992, 7; J. Cameron and G. Underhill, 'School warns on satanism', *The Cape Times*, 23 September 1992, 1; A. van der Westhuizen, 'Satanisme aan die Rand is skrikwekkend hoog', *Beeld*, 24 September 1992, 4; H. van der Merwe, 'Dis omdat liggame so gou ontwikkel', *Die Transvaler*, 14 September 1992, 9; 'Onderwysers moet bedag wees op tekend wat op Satanisme by kinders dui', *Die Kerkbode*, 11 June 1993, 1 and N. Dedekind, 'Leerlinge ingelig oor satanisme', *Die Volksblad*, 17 June 1993, 13.

¹⁹² T. Engelbrecht, 'Bekende TV-aanbieder van satanisme beskuldig', *Beeld*, 10 June 1993, 1; G. Engelbrecht, 'Duo's music satanic, says dominee: Protest', *The Citizen*, 10 June 1993, 10; T. Engelbrecht, 'Dominee ontken dat hy popgroep van satanisme beskuldig het', *Beeld*, 11 June 1993, 1; I. Kühne, 'NG kerk swyg nog oor ye-ye-debakel', *Beeld*, 11 June 1992, 3; I. Kühne, 'NG Kerk sal beweringe oor ye-ye ondersoek', *Beeld*, 15 June 1993, 4; 'Daar's niks stouts in ye-ye se seksuele energie', *Beeld*, 16 June 1993, 9 and 'Ye-ye: leraar ontken bewerings', *Die Kerkbode*, 18 June 1993, 1.

¹⁹³ See, for example, 'Police dismiss talk of Satanism', *The Natal Witness*, 9 August 1990, 3; 'Police probe Satanism', *The Cape Times*, 22 August 1990, 3; C. Kotze and M. Nicolson, 'Police can't confirm "Satanist grave sites" report', *The Star*, 22 August 1990, 2; 'Gag on 2nd Satanism expert', *Weekend Post*, 22 June 1991, 2 and 'Satanism: Gags and Secrecy', *Eastern Province Herald*, 25 June 1991, 8.

trapped in drug addiction and sexual perversion, the vulnerable child twisted as much by the influences of popular culture as by the satanic predator, and the Satanic adult who silently directed the secret movement. Intertwined with this threat, particularly where the allegedly deviant qualities of popular culture were concerned, hostility towards the New Age movement was amplified by general alarm over Satanism and the perceived degeneration of social morality. Indeed, this folk devil subsumed a large portion of the blame for the shifting cultural terrain in drawing attention to immediate social problems like drug abuse, divorce and suicide. After all, in addition to undermining law and order in general, Satanists reportedly prayed for the financial ruin and breakdown of marriages of white South Africans.¹⁹⁴ Here, journalist Arthur Goldstuck made an important point, albeit with some hindsight, when he noted that ‘backed by the flimsiest of evidence, the police and the media have transformed Satanists from a fringe group of occult dabblers and sexual perverts into a powerful threat to the white way of life.’¹⁹⁵ This ‘powerful threat’ reflected more than the overt and tangible changes in youth culture and family structure. Heterogeneous and uneven, the moral panic explored in this chapter also articulated a myriad of concerns regarding the current and future health of white society and broadly reflected changes in the arena of political rhetoric.

Anxiety over the threat potential of the New Age movement voiced concern over the initiative of ‘peace’, and more broadly the cost at which it came. Hostility towards New Agers – and all those linked to the depiction of the movement as insidious and ‘partially satanic’ – largely reflected fears of conservative and charismatic Christians regarding coalescing religious and cultural boundaries. However, the narrative of the New Age threat, often referred to as ‘NAM’, was raised predominantly by Afrikaners in Afrikaans newspapers and articulated various fears regarding cultural change. While raising long held concerns about the growing materialism of modern South African society and wariness towards the influences of modern culture, the vehemence with which the New Age was opposed also underscored concerns about fracturing cultural solidarity. While the Voëlvry movement and End Conscription Campaign signalled broadening generational and ideological cracks in the edifice of ‘Afrikanerdom’, this counterculture’s ‘NAM’ also served to funnel anxieties over these cultural shifts.

¹⁹⁴ Interview with Kobus Jonker in P. Candido, ‘Satanism goes on rampage’, *The Star*, 20 April 1991, 1.

¹⁹⁵ A. Goldstuck, ‘Satanic vices are hot stuff for media,’ *Weekly Mail*, 1 October 1992, 11.

Vlok and Volk

More broadly, however, the New Age movement was repeatedly alleged to be working on behalf of the ‘anti-Christ’ to create a single world religion and culture. Ascending with the fall of the Berlin Wall, the evolution of the ‘holism peril’ in South Africa saw the characteristics of the dying *volk* devil of communism shifted onto the threat of the New Age and devil worship.¹⁹⁶ Indeed, the calls to ban devil worship in South Africa were couched in terms of ‘destructive freedom’ and coincided with the legalisation of both communism and the African National Congress.¹⁹⁷ In June 1990, the Minister of Law and Order, Adriaan Vlok, successfully merged circulating fears when he asserted that the unholy trinity of drugs, Satanism and communism threatened South Africa’s children – the precious ‘building blocks of the new South Africa.’¹⁹⁸ Here Vlok also typified some of the contradictions the arena of daily politicking during South Africa’s political transition. In reassuring the public that the government did not condone Satanism even though it was legal, Vlok noted ‘[t]oday there is the false perception by some people that the Government now condones Communism in South Africa, because it is no longer banned.’¹⁹⁹ Whilst carrying long held fears over the borders of political and cultural change, the satanic menace also reflected considerable unease about the government and the right-wing.

Echoing the rhetoric around the alleged ‘Third Force’ which threatened to plunge South Africa into bloody civil war as well as *verkrampste* claims that the National Party had betrayed its people, the satanic menace had allegedly infiltrated positions of power in South Africa.²⁰⁰ Amid calls for the government to take action, one newspaper noted ‘[i]t is time the issue was given attention at top level. The sinister veil of secrecy over the movement’s activities must formally be lifted and its ringleaders exposed, especially if – as has been

¹⁹⁶ See, for example, R. Wurmbrand, ‘Karl Marx’s ties with Satanism’, *Diversie Publikasies*, March 1989, 26; W. P. du Plessis, ‘1 Mei in Suid-Afrika’, *Die Kerkblad*, 21 February 1990, 12; ‘APK wil na FW oor Kommuniste’, *Beeld*, 24 September 1990, 4; ‘Teoloë verskil met Slovo oor sosialisme’, *Die Burger*, 8 October 1990, 9; ‘Meidag se sleg sal gewys word’, *Beeld*, 10 January 1991, 5 and ‘Satanisme’, *Die Afrikaner*, 24 June 1992, 10.

¹⁹⁷ This was quite overt in the linking of Satanism and Communism. See for example: C. Le Grange, ‘Church cautions on Satanism reports’, *The Star*, 22 May 1990, 13; ‘Satanism: Appalling claims’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 21 May 1990, 10; ‘Satanism is a reality to be confronted’, *Evening Post*, 22 May 1990, 2 and ‘Satanism in city’, *Diamond Fields Advertiser*, 26 August 1990, 6.

¹⁹⁸ ‘Vlok warns of drugs, Satan and communism’, *Natal Mercury*, 2 July 1990, 3.; ‘Vlok pleads: resist drugs, communism’, *The Citizen*, 30 June 1990, 10 and C. Kotze, ‘SAP probing Satanism to fight it, assures Vlok’, *The Star*, 2 July 1990, 6.

¹⁹⁹ ‘Vlok pleads: resist drugs, communism’, *The Citizen*, 30 June 1990, 10.

²⁰⁰ Explicit allegations against the National Party arose, see for example, “‘Satan’ tract queried”, *The Citizen*, 22 February 1992, 8.

claimed – there are among them people in key positions in our community.’²⁰¹ In contrast to the moral panic between 1978 and 1982, discussed in Chapter Three, these claims went relatively uncontested. Indeed, unlike the Paarl clergyman who dared repeat the rumour that members of the National Party might be Satanists, no tide of indignation resulted from the widespread rumours that influential public and community leaders were doing the Devil’s work.²⁰² These rumours not only went unchallenged, they were corroborated in the similar statements made by public officials, including those of Vlok. Such claims were also made about the South African Defence Force, the mainstay of white South African masculine strength, and more specifically the visible power of the white government.²⁰³ As tales of Satanism infiltrating schools spread, so did rumours of devil worship in the military. Fears that servicemen were participating in such devilish behaviour were sparked in 1988 with reports of animal cruelty in the SADF camps, and again in 1989.²⁰⁴ Such fears underwent the same amplification as those over devilish behaviour among a rebellious, but vulnerable, youth. Indeed, by mid-1991 it was reported that ‘national servicemen have become unashamed about Satanism and actively try recruit members.’²⁰⁵ Moreover, while the *verkrampste* Conservative Party certainly strategically reaped the benefits of the moral panic by blaming the National Party, at times the right-wing was linked to the satanic menace. The swastika was shown as a satanic symbol, while some self-confessed Satanists alleged that they had been members of a right-wing organisation before joining a satanic cult.²⁰⁶ It was also alleged that Satanists were responsible for township violence, supplying black ‘witchdoctors’ with guns in exchange for the babies and organs needed for their sacrifices.

²⁰¹ ‘Satanism is a reality to be confronted’, *Evening Post*, 22 May 1990, 2.

²⁰² ‘Satanism statement clarified’, *The Cape Times*, 8 May 1982, 2; S. Albrecht, ‘Predikant maan oor minister’, *Die Vaderland*, 10 May 1982, 3 and ‘Predikant vra om verskoning oor satanskimp’, *Die Transvaler*, 10 May 1982, 4. Also see ‘“Satan” tract queried’, *The Citizen*, 22 February 1992, 8. This was similarly expressed in assertions that safety from Satanism could be found in cultural, Christian solidarity – ‘do you believe in God? Do you share my language and culture? Do you love this land/nation?’ See ‘Satanisme-jag kwel ook jeug’, *Die Transvaler*, 20 December 1989, 6.

²⁰³ See, for example, A. Seegers, *The Military in the Making of Modern South Africa* (London: Tauris Academic Studies, 1996) and P. H. Frankel, *Pretoria’s Praetorians: Civil-military Relations in South Africa* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

²⁰⁴ ‘Mishandele diere: SAW gaan optree’, *Die Burger*, 21 August 1988, 11; ‘Animal cruelty “rife in SADF camps”’, *Weekend Argus*, 7 May 1988, 1; ‘Devil worship in Ladysmith’, *The Natal Mercury*, 15 February 1989, 1; ‘SADF men sent home after Satanism probe’, *The Cape Times*, 15 February 1989, 26 and H. Jansen, ‘Satanism and the SADF’, *Sunday Times*, 30 June 1991, 14.

²⁰⁵ H. Jansen, ‘Satanism and the SADF’, *Sunday Times*, 30 June 1991, 14.

²⁰⁶ See, for example, ‘The dark secrets of a large house’, *Weekend Argus*, 19 May 1990, 15; J. Maker, ‘Devil disciple told to kill son’, *The Sunday Star*, 20 May 1990, 13; ‘All-black house reveals secrets of Satanism’, *The Sunday Star*, 20 May 1990, 13; ‘EL seen as the top center of Satanism’, *Evening Post*, 21 May 1990, 3; J. Maker, ‘PE Satanist: I ate human flesh’, *Evening Post*, 21 May 1990, 1; ‘Signs and symbols of Satanism’, *Weekend Argus*, 26 May 1990, 15 and ‘Die skemer wêreld van die Satanisme’, *Die Patriot*, 15 March 1991, 10.

After all, the aim of all Satanists was engender the ‘complete chaos and anarchy’ that would cripple white South Africa.²⁰⁷

Essentially, sites of white hegemony were portrayed as both vulnerable to deviant influences, but also as perpetuating and disseminating these detrimental practices. More specifically, the segments charged with protecting and maintaining white South African values had been inverted – now facilitating the secretive cult of Satanists whose mission was to subvert and destroy society. Reflecting this widespread implicit loss of confidence in the South African State, the tales of child sacrifice in themselves symbolically articulated feelings of uncertainty in white South Africa. White children, the very future of white South African society, were being consumed by power-hungry white Satanists, or perverted by the deviant desires of the satanic cult.²⁰⁸ These feelings were also underscored by the repeated calls for the government to take action against the threat, as well as to limit ‘destructive freedom’ by banning Satanism. Such calls were never answered and the official position was never entirely clear: some public officials condemned Satanism outright, whilst others dismissed the notion as little more than a flight of fancy. Thus, by directing Satanism to the sites of white hegemony in South Africa, the discourse of the moral panic brought to the surface feelings of insecurity in white South Africa through the image of the white child as a victim of a pervasive social evil and as potential purveyor of evil, as well as the loss of faith in the apartheid government.

Conclusion

In the interregnum between the death of apartheid and the first breath of democracy in April 1994, South Africans experienced a ream of anxieties and hopes for the ‘new South Africa’. Whilst various anxieties and desires played out in the political arena and the widespread violence in the country, this interregnum was also privy to the particularly morbid symptom of a satanic panic in white South Africa. Occurring with Botha’s stroke and the ensuing diarchy within the National Party and ending with interim constitution born from months of tense negotiations in 1993, this moral panic subsumed a variety of fears within a rapidly changing South Africa. As this chapter has shown, the constructed folk devil of Satanism,

²⁰⁷ Gardiner and Gardiner, *Satanism*, 87.

²⁰⁸ Bowman has noted similar sentiments expressed in the growing concern over children and paedophilia in the same period. See: B. Bowman, ‘Children, pathology and politics: a genealogy of the paedophile in South Africa between 1944 and 2004’, *South African Journal of Psychology*, 40, 4 (2010), 443 – 464.

and the emergent *volk* devil of the ‘holism peril’, served to vilify and funnel a variety of anxieties.

There were strata of meaning in this moral panic over Satanism, 1989 – 1993. One layer involved the more explicit concerns regarding social change, observable in the convergence of certain types of behaviours and activities with the satanic threat. Certainly concerns about the potential effects of foreign influences were merged with those over white cultural fragmentation, of which the Voëlvry movement was deemed a particular threat. Other immediate concerns were similarly intensified through convergence with Satanism, including drug abuse, homosexuality and suicide. The closely associated ‘New Age’ movement was also besmirched by fears over Satanism, but also proved particularly absorptive of the attributes once ascribed to communism. This evolving *volk* devil, limited mostly to Afrikaans newspapers and commentators, also articulated concerns over the strength and permeability of cultural borders in a changing South Africa. Encompassed by the folk devil of Satanism, anxieties about the influences of the New Age movement from abroad and devil worship from within gravitated around the image of the white youth. Such expressions also underscored a loss of confidence in the general public – particularly in those institutions that were supposed to protect and maintain (white) ‘cultural values’. Thus, in a second, subtler layer involving the location of the satanic threat, sites of white hegemony were perceived as weak and corrupted.

The articulation of these concerns expressed both immediate anxieties of social change as well as more widespread fears of uncertainty regarding the future of white society or the ability, and indeed, motives of the government and other cultural guardians to ensure that future. These fears did not only express themselves in terms of Satanism and the insidious deeds its followers were rumoured to perpetrate, nor was this particular folk devil all-encompassing. Rather, these fears regarding the rise of satanic activity and influence – which occurred across the global West – served as a scapegoat: a horrific and emotive threat through which localized anxieties over social change, powerlessness and insecurity could be funnelled.

Chapter Six:***Volk, Devils and Moral Panics***

Although never entirely eclipsed from the news, by the end of 1993 the Devil and his underlings had receded in the public imagination of white South Africa. As the country moved towards the first democratic election in April 1994, the communal alarm over the perceived satanic onslaught subsided despite the continued allegations by the police and press that Satanism was a problem. Indeed, parents were chided for overreacting and officials for inciting a witch-hunt.¹ The growing optimism of the emergent Rainbow Nation even inflected some tales of the Devil's children: 'reborn Satanists' advocated a 'gentler' form of devil worship that required no rape, murder or animal cruelty.² The satanic panic faded from public memory, but remnants survived in urban legend and the Occult Related Crimes Unit. The Devil still lurked in a few places.

Dubbed 'Satan's bridge', the Devil is still thought to linger on the Van Staden's bridge outside of Port Elizabeth. Once the lair of 'satanic dabblers', the Devil himself is believed to coax the suicidal over the bridge's edge.³ The desecration of gravestones and churches, graffiti and some petty vandalism is still blamed on 'satanic dabblers',⁴ while pet owners are often urged to keep their black cats indoors over the 'satanic' night of Halloween.⁵ Self-proclaimed Satanists continue to offer their testimony to the congregations of the church and the press. A convicted murderer reportedly wanted to testify at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in exchange for his freedom, claiming to have trafficked children under the

¹ See, for example, P. Lee, 'What parents should look out for', *Sunday Tribune*, 10 July 1994, 8; P. Lee, 'It's black and white: Satanism is Satanism, says colonel', *Sunday Tribune*, 10 July 1994, 8 and M. Smith, 'Heksejag op onskuldige kinders', *Die Volksblad*, 15 December 1994, 15.

² 'Going soft on Satan', *Sunday Tribune*, 10 July 1994, 8.

³ "'Strange forces' aid teenager's suicide leap', *The Natal Witness*, 5 January 1995, 1; S. Nash, "'Strange force pulled boy to his death'", *City Press*, 8 January 1995, 1; 'Occult cop for 'satan bridge'", *The Cape Times*, 9 January 1995, 3. Also see P. Lee, 'A beacon of hope at popular suicide spot', *Sunday Tribune*, 6 July 1997, 14.

⁴ See, for example, 'community fears it has Satanist in midst', *The Star*, 22 July 1997, 6; S. Gillham, 'Vandals wreck PE graves', *Eastern Province Herald*, 18 December 1998, 4 and M. Hilton-Barber, 'Villagers shocked by full-scale attack on cemetery on night of full moon', *Saturday Star*, 12 December 1998, 5.

⁵ W. Steenkamp, 'Animal lovers told to keep black cats indoors because "devil's night is coming"', *Saturday Argus*, 18 October 1998, 4; W. Steenkamp, 'Beware! Satanic rituals endanger your black tabby', *Saturday Star*, 24 October 1998, 5. Other aspects faded completely, in 1998, for example, the 'peace poles' once deemed 'demonic' were again erected but without a murmur of complaint. See 'Japan donates peace pole to SA', *The Natal Witness*, 23 December 1998, 3.

apartheid regime as part of a satanic conspiracy by the secret police.⁶ Other criminals have implicated the Devil in their deeds. In 1995, for example, the ‘Ripper Rapist’, Frans du Toit, blamed his crimes on the insatiable ‘satanic demon’ inside him and underwent a highly publicised exorcism to prove it. Having confessed to raping three women, the last of whom survived multiple stab wounds and having her throat slit, the trial of the ‘Ripper Rapist’ gave pause to this ‘demon defence’. With a defendant blaming Satan, the court called in ‘God’s Detective’, Kobus Jonker.⁷ Having emerged from the satanic panic as South Africa’s most well known expert on the occult, Jonker exonerated the Devil from this particular crime spree. He argued that true demon possession would have left no memory of the crime, that Satan’s spawn was incapable of planning ahead, and that ‘demons don’t use condoms.’⁸

Waging a government-sanctioned war against the Devil throughout the 1990s, the Occult Related Crimes Unit was the most durable relic of the satanic panic. Although an array of crimes ranging from those linked to esotericism and mysticism to ‘muti’ murder and witch purging have fallen under the broad banner of ‘occult related crime’, this specialised Occult Unit was primarily involved in combatting Satanism. As Petrus has noted, the emphasis of the educational ‘occult-related crime’ literature dispersed to police officers detailed various satanic memorabilia and warning signs of satanic involvement in children.⁹ Throughout the 1990s the ‘Hound of God’ and his cult cops continued to warn against the satanic onslaught through articles, seminars, workshops and public talks.¹⁰ In addition to the Devil, however,

⁶ J. Cameron, ‘Bizarre tales of satan and the slave trade’, *Saturday Star*, 30 August 1997, 2 and J. Cameron, ‘Exposed: The monsters who steal our kids’, *Saturday Star*, 30 August 1997, 1.

⁷ D. van Heerden, ‘Seks, satanisme na egskeiding’, *Rapport*, 21 May 1995, 6; ‘Court hears of rape by Satanist’, *The Natal Witness*, 13 June 1995, 5; ‘Court hears of gruesome rapes’, *The Natal Witness*, 14 June 1995, 3; ‘Satanists found guilty of 3 rapes’, *Sowetan*, 15 June 1995, 9; D. van Heerden ‘Bloed-band met Satan, hekse-seks dryf hom’, *Rapport*, 18 June 1995, 5; ‘Satanist rapist “was ruled by demon”’, *The Natal Witness*, 20 June 1995, 3; J. Nel, ‘Ripper rapist: exorcist’s story’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 21 June 1995, 1; J. Nel, ‘Rippers’ knife made breakfast’, *Eastern Province Herald*, 21 June 1995, 2; J. Nel, “‘Five men held Frans du Toit””, *Eastern Province Herald*, 22 June 1995, 2. Also see M. Thamm, *I Have Life: Alison’s Journey as told to Mariaane Thamm* (South Africa: The Penguin Group, 2002).

⁸ Kobus Jonker, Interview by author. Digital Recording. Pretoria, 26 August 2010. J. Nel, “‘Demons do not select hosts’ victims””, *Eastern Province Herald*, 22 June 1995, 1. Crimes are often attributed to Satan or the Devil’s influence. See, for example, ‘Satanist angle probed in murder’, *The Star*, 17 February 1995, 3; A. Singh, C. Peters and B. Cole, ‘Kim: Was it satanism?’, *The Daily News*, 16 February 1995, 1; ‘Meisie (12) glo in satansritueel aangerand’, *Die Burger*, 24 February 1995, 15. Also see, for example, ‘Abduction bids “likely for satanic sacrifice”’, *Weekend Star*, 16 April 1995, 12 and L. Meyer, ‘Sataniste het kinders glo prober ontvoer’, *Rapport*, 16 April 1995, 6.

⁹ T. S. Petrus, ‘An anthropological study of witch-craft related crime in the Eastern Cape and its implications for Law Enforcement policy and practice’ (PhD thesis, Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University, Port Elizabeth, 2009), 139.

¹⁰ P. Candido, ‘Occult unit experts describe exorcisms and the threat of heavy-metal music’, *Saturday Star*, 24 June 1995, 4; ‘Increase in Satanism among young: Police’, *The Citizen*, 8 July 1995, 3; E. Groenink, ‘How serious a problem is Satanism?’, *Saturday Star*, 8 July 1995, 3; M. Pieters, ‘SAPD se okkulteenheid help met

the Occult Related Crimes Unit also had to fight both waning public interest and statistics: only four of the 18 312 murders in South Africa during 1994 were related to Satanism, and between 1992 and 1998 the Unit made only 240 arrests.¹¹

The declaration of police during the heyday of the satanic panics that Satanism was the ‘crime of the 1990s’¹² proved prophetic: the last remnant of the satanic panic in white South Africa dissipated with the disbanding of the Occult Related Crimes Unit during the reorganisation of the police detective service in 2001.¹³ Although the Unit was officially closed down, a more muted, less high profile body of ‘occult crimes’ police detectives still functions in the South African Police Services, and is based in Pretoria. They still perform awareness campaigns in schools and say that their attention is half directed towards Satanism and half towards witchcraft.¹⁴ That same year, and the opening vignette of this thesis, the torso of a small African child was found floating in London’s River Thames, and was immediately deemed a victim of African witchcraft. In a case that came to express the fears and preconceptions about the ‘dangers’ of African cultural beliefs and African immigrants in the United Kingdom, the Case of Adam was shaped by vocabulary and expertise entrenched in the transnational, Eurocentric Satanism Scare of the 1980s and early 1990s. Indeed, it saw the return of the term ‘ritual abuse’ to the mass media, and ‘ritual abuse’ experts like Valerie Sinason and ‘cult cop’ Jonker to the public stage. Underscoring the aggregated understanding of the ‘occult’, Jonker’s career had furnished a collection of ‘occult items’ from tribal masks to pin-stabbed dolls. Only recently have academics and professionals begun to advocate the need for a clearer distinctions between conceptualisations of African and European

skapelsaak’, *Beeld*, 21 July 1995, 2; I. Oellermann, ‘Satan’s hotbed city’, *The Daily News*, 11 August 1995, 1; ‘SAPS meetings on Satanism’, *The Natal Witness*, 17 February 1997, 4; ‘Parents beware: satanism is a fatal attraction’, *Sowetan*, 1 July 1997, 2; D. Morgan, ‘A man called Donker girds his loins for his daily battle with the devil’, *The Sunday Independent*, 14 August 1997, 17; L. Rippenaar, ‘Occult-related killings on the rise: Workshop targets Satanism’, *Cape Argus*, 7 September 1998, 9; ‘Warriors against Evil’, *Servamus*, November 1998, 10 and M. Monare, ‘Cop issues Satanism alert’, *Pretoria News*, 16 August 2000, 7. Also see M. Warrington, ‘Satanisme’, *Servamus*, July 1996, 46 – 47; M. Fourie, ‘Magsbasis teen okkultverwante misdrywe en dwelms’, *Servamus*, June 1998, 26 – 28; ‘Warriors against evil’, *Servamus*, November 1998, 9 – 12; ‘The mysterious world of satanism’, *Servamus*, December 1998, 8 – 11; M. Fourie, ‘Slaves of Fear’, *Servamus*, February 1999, 16 – 19 and M. Fourie, ‘Breaking the Circle’, *Servamus*, 8 – 12.

¹¹ Statistics provided by Kobus Jonker in S. Coan, ‘The devil in our midst?’, *The Natal Witness*, 20 March 1997, 10. The Unit also claimed that there had been over thirteen hundred crimes related to ‘occult-related beliefs’ between 1998 and 1999 including abortion, rape and grave desecration. P. Ngwezi, ‘Satanism: 1300 crimes in two years’, *Pretoria News*, 20 July 2000, 7.

¹² R. Milne, ‘It’s the crime of the ‘90s – police’, *Weekend Argus*, 25 May 1990, 15.

¹³ Also see J. Redpath, ‘Leaner and Meaner? Restructuring the Detective Service’, *Monograph*, 73 (2002).

¹⁴ Lieutenant-Colonel Nelson Komama (SAPS), phone interview, 10:20-10:29, 31 October 2011.

formulations of the 'occult'.¹⁵ Steeped in European preconceptions, the Case of Adam accentuated, albeit unwittingly, the problem of the term 'occult'. Indeed, the interchanging terminology of the Case of Adam as a victim of 'muti', 'voodoo', 'witchcraft' and 'ritual abuse' underscores the difficulties of the aggregated occult in studying the multifarious beliefs in Africa.¹⁶

However, as this thesis has shown, this problem of the 'aggregated occult' is also present in the Satanism of white South Africa. While linked to the global Satanism Scare that reverberated across the global West during the 1980s and 1990s, the satanic panic was not simply imported into the South African imagination. The objective existence of Satanism in South Africa and its local cadence and timbre is a relatively unexplored aspect of the South African occult in academia, swept aside by the more tangible and pressing issues of 'muti' and witchcraft in post-apartheid South Africa. Between 1991 and 1997, for example, there were over three hundred witchcraft murders in the Northern Province, 215 of which occurred in 1994.¹⁷ However, the Devil and his followers have journeyed beyond the tabloid media: emerging as a defence in trials, forming an integral aspect of Christian identity, and also shaping police procedure in the first years of the democratic South Africa. Existing in the arenas of the discursive and the objective, the spiritual and the criminal, Satanism provides an analytical intersection of class, race and gender in the cultural landscapes of South Africa. This thesis has raised many questions which warrant further academic attention, one of which is an ethnographic study of the Occult Related Crimes Unit itself, especially through a close reading of the internal police magazine *Servamus*. This thesis has focused on that which the Occult Related Crimes Unit sought to attack, but that which it sought to defend is important too: the white heterosexual family. Such an ethnographic study would open up shifting perceptions of white hegemonic masculinity and fatherhood in apartheid and post-apartheid South Africa. The changing political order overturned local social hierarchies, already changing under the flows of new technologies and identities in a globalising world, posing a

¹⁵ Petrus, 'An anthropological study of witch-craft related crime in the Eastern Cape and its implications for Law Enforcement policy and practice', 139 and T. S. Petrus, 'Ritual Crime: Anthropological Considerations and Contributions to a New Field of Study', *Acta Criminologica*, 20, 2, (2007), 119 – 137.

¹⁶ See T. Ranger, 'Review Article: Scotland Yard in the Bush: Medicine murders, child witches and the construction of the occult: A Literature Review', *Africa*, 77, 2 (2007), 272 – 283; G. ter Haar and S. Ellis, 'The Occult does not exist: A response to Terence Ranger', *Africa*, 79, 3 (2009), 399 – 411 and B. Meyer, 'Response to Ter Haar and Ellis', *Africa*, 79, 3 (2009), 413 – 415.

¹⁷ A. Minnaar, 'Witch purging in the Northern Province of South Africa: A victim profile and an assessment of initiatives to deal with witchcraft', Paper presented to the 9th International Symposium on Victimology, Amsterdam, 25th – 29th August 1997.

fundamental challenge to previously hegemonic identities as the white, heterosexual family lost its position as the minima of civilization.¹⁸ This also calls for an ethnography of changing forms of white rebellion who have embraced a satanic identity as a form of self-expression. Such studies would also serve to clarify the boundaries (always shifting and blurring) between Eurocentric and Afrocentric conceptions of spirituality, the ‘occult’ and identity in a post-apartheid and globalising South Africa.

This thesis has explored an aspect of Satanism in its discussion of the ‘satanic peril’, the shifting perceptions of Satanism that manifested at particular moments of social change in white South Africa between 1976 and 1993. In so doing, this thesis has also touched upon a hitherto unexplored aspect of the global Satanism Scare and modern witch-hunt: two satanic panics in white South Africa in which the global and local, foreign but familiar, were always interacting. Disproportionate to the objective existence of the problem, this ‘satanic peril’ only appeared twice between 1976 and 1993: the first four years of P. W. Botha’s premiership during which the National Party made considerable changes to the country’s apartheid policy and rifts within Afrikaner Nationalism widened irrevocably; and the final four years of white supremacy when South Africa transitioned from a white oligarchy to a democracy. In tracing the inflections of social change in this heightened discourse on Satanism during these periods, this thesis has interpreted these as moments of moral panic in white South Africa. In doing so, this thesis has aimed to highlight the advantages of moral panic theory for social historians. Indeed, the study of moral panics may prove particularly fruitful for comparative and interdisciplinary studies in topics ranging from changing perceptions of ‘Good’ and ‘Evil’ to the perceptions of vigilante violence in the media. Academic attention should also be directed towards comparing black and white moral panics, particularly – as Ashforth has shown – with the rise of the African Independent Churches, which saw ‘African’ witches start to be associated with Satan.¹⁹

While it is true that some have studied such phenomena without turning to theory, this thesis has advocated that a critical understanding of moral panic theory draws to the fore dynamics that may have otherwise remained submerged. In a distinction discussed in Chapter Two, the

¹⁸ S. Swart, “‘Man, Gun and Horse’: Hard Right Afrikaner Masculine Identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa”, in R. Morrell, ed, *Changing Men in Southern Africa* (Pietermaritzburg: University of Natal Press, 2001), 80.

¹⁹ A. Ashforth, *Witchcraft, Violence, and Democracy in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005) and A. Balcomb, ‘From Apartheid to the New Dispensations: Evangelicals and the Democratization of South Africa’, *Journal of Religion in Africa*, 34, 1/2 (2004), 5 – 38.

concept of the ‘moral panic’ has been used to foreground the dynamics of the historically recognizable moral panic *phenomenon*. The arguments and interpretations made in this thesis have been shaped further by an awareness of the social, geographic and temporal contours of the moral panic phenomenon.

Shortly before the ‘nightmare nurseries’ began to engulf the United States in a wave of satanic scandal, South Africa endured its own virulent satanic panic. As discussed in Chapter Three, between 1978 and 1982 South Africa’s white youth was construed as particularly vulnerable to a host of satanic influences, as well as a secret cult of devil worshippers, the ‘Black Mass’ and the satanic Buddha. Constituting a period of moral panic, the emergence of this ‘satanic peril’ was constructed as a danger to the morality and safety of all white South Africans. Shaped by the assertions of interest groups like the Dutch Reformed Church and the Action Moral Standards movement, the deviant image of the Satanist was further solidified by claims-makers. Social fears and allegations combined in the bizarre image of the cat killing, blood-swigging, satanic yogi who practiced kung-fu, listened to ‘modern music’ and habitually prayed for the downfall of white South Africa. This ‘moral onslaught’ was fostered during P. W. Botha’s ‘total onslaught’ rhetoric. Occurring in a period of fracturing Afrikaner nationalism and the first signs of the possibility of the end of apartheid, the moral panic between 1978 and 1982 expressed feelings of cultural insecurity, moral pessimism and even persecution. Satanists were perceived as placing their material ambition before those of the Afrikaner *volk*, attacking the religion of the Afrikaner *volk*, infiltrating the cultural strongholds of the Afrikaner *volk* and punishing good white South Africans with heart attacks and divorce.

This widespread alarm faded quickly from newspapers and public concern. Alleged to have increased from 40 000 to 250 000 between 1978 and 1982, by 1983 only traces of the satanic menace lingered in local newspapers around the country. The decade of the 1980s was marked by successive states of emergency, the ‘people’s war’ and the emergence of the counterculture among white South Africans. While it endured no widespread apprehension over the satanic menace, the decade was dotted with some satanic-related debate, particularly where popular culture was concerned. However, this was not the case abroad, and Chapter Four has discussed the rapid development and transnational spread of the Satanic Ritual Abuse Scare during the 1980s and early 1990s. An important aspect of this international Satanism Scare was its narrative. Grisly tales of the ‘Satanic Mass’ constituted a modern

version of the Black Mass, in which Satanists ritually abused, tortured and murdered children. South Africa experienced a second satanic panic amidst this international Satanism Scare, the outbreak of which occurred in close proximity to that in the United Kingdom. While the narrative of the ‘Satanic Mass’ altered from country to country, this thesis has argued that South Africa’s satanic panic was distinctly different in that it did not centre on the problem of satanic ritual abuse. Of course, elements of the Satanism Scare trickled into South Africa at different rates – for example, the rumour and boycott of Proctor and Gamble, which originated in the United States in 1980, only arrived in South Africa in 1996. However, allegations of satanic ritual abuse appeared in South African newspapers as early as 1986, but failed to garner the attention of the South African public. Echoing trends abroad, South Africa’s satanic panic between 1989 and 1993 engendered an intensely more violent and explicit satanic narrative of the Black Mass than that of its earlier satanic panic (1978 – 1982). However, while the narrative of the Black Mass transgressed geographic and temporal boundaries, it was inflected by the local context and expressed localized anxieties.

Erupting in 1989, the satanic panic conceived during South Africa’s transition to democracy was articulated in terms of anarchy, rebellion and corruption. Proclaiming the impending ‘satanic era’, the discourse of the moral panic built around the apparent ascendance of devil worship and the New Age in white South Africa. It was inculcated with the erstwhile characteristics of the communist peril, which had itself lost its power to scare with the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. The emergent ‘holism peril’ of the New Age movement saw the mass protest of two ‘peace poles’, the public castigation of the Voëlvry movement, and attempted incineration of the ‘satanic’ Ninja Turtles. These acts served to amplify already circulating rumours that child murdering devil worshippers were now also recruiting vulnerable teenagers into the Satanism, and had infiltrated high schools, university campuses, the South African Defense Force and the government. Occurring in waves of report and rumour that both responded to and aggravated social concern, this panic reached its apex in 1991. It crested when rapid myth-making and hearsay engendered a kidnap panic that saw hundreds of parents across the country remove their children from schools. As Chapter Five has shown, this satanic panic was fostered by hearsay rather than evidence, and actually began to subside after the creation of the Occult Related Crimes Unit in 1992 – the provision of actual cases of ‘satanic dabblers’ insufficient to resuscitate flagging public interest.

Powerful expressions of ideological discontent, these panics resonated with underlying anxieties in white South Africa. It was these concerns upon which the moral panic fed, as the folk devil was constructed as a predator circling the vulnerable social order. The perception that the social structure was weakened and destabilized pervaded both the satanic moral panics discussed in this thesis: divorce rates were increasing, parental authority was declining, and children were more vulnerable. Although these social problems have existed throughout the twentieth century, they were considerably heightened during the periods of moral panic and evoked the sense that social order was becoming social disorder. It appeared to be degenerating from an idealized time where white, moral, spiritual and familial authority was absolute. It was here that social boundaries were reiterated: white, heterosexual relationships were to be upheld, wayward women were vulnerable, 'modern' and foreign influences were to be treated warily rather than embraced, and material desire was to capitulate to the needs of culture and family. Of course, these concerns continued well beyond the borders of the moral panic, but the heightened moral discourse saw these slight alterations to the ideological contours of white society policed and debated during the panic.

The moral entrepreneurs during both moral panics were predominantly, but not exclusively, educated middle class males who presented themselves as cultural guardians. However, these moral entrepreneurs and their condemnation of 'satanic influences' were not unique to these moral panics: in the shifting perceptions of social order the 'satanic peril' was rediscovered during periods of rapid social change. Certainly, as demonstrated throughout this thesis, interest groups maneuvered public concerns to their own advantage: in August 1981, P. W. Botha took the opportunity to condemn all those who sought to undermine the apartheid government as part of the satanic threat, the Action Moral Standards movement enjoyed far more favourable attention to their concerns between 1978 and 1982, while in 1989 the Conservative Party took every opportunity to blame the satanic encroachment on the negligence of the National Party. However, as this thesis has shown, the activities of interest groups and claims-makers are incapable of initiating moral panic on their own. Even the sensationalism of the press cannot foster public concern into widespread panic by itself. Rather, it is the convergence of media sensationalism, claims-making, the agency of interest groups, and heightened social anxiety that gives flesh to the ethereal folk devil.

Moreover, these moral panics were heterogeneous and uneven: expressing a variety of social grievances and anxieties through convergence and symbolization that ranged from the

condemnation of drug abuse to the growth of materialism. Most importantly, as this thesis has argued, both the satanic panics in white South Africa articulated apprehension over cultural hegemony and solidarity. Between 1978 and 1982, growing moral pessimism and a sense of foreboding molded the 'satanic peril'. While interest groups drew considerable attention to their concerns with eastern mysticism and changing youth norms, the public response bound these concerns to fears that Afrikaner solidarity was fragmenting and that white society was on the brink of losing control of its youth, culture and future. The allegations circulating in the media reflected a growing sense of powerlessness and unease during a period of economic tumult, the infighting of Afrikaner nationalism, and the recognizable divergences between class and cultural aspirations among white Afrikaners. Articulating the cultural concerns during a particular turning point in white South Africa, the vocabulary of this satanic panic returned in an intensified form less than a decade later. The satanic panic between 1989 and 1993 expressed a decade of cultural and political fragmentation. Influenced by global trends, the narrative of the Black Mass grew explicitly violent. Thus during this moral panic eastern mysticism was transformed into the more hostile threat of the New Age movement, a corrupted and rebellious youth became not only potential victims but a threat to white society, and cultural guardians were portrayed as incapable of protecting the ideological and physical interests of white South Africans.

To conclude, the heightened discourse on Satanism discussed in this thesis expressed a complex of social changes between 1976 and 1993. Using the concept of the moral panic as an analytical tool, this thesis has shown how these moral panics and the emergence of the 'satanic peril' echoed the shifting perceptions of cultural solidarity and hegemony as the edifices of Afrikaner nationalism and apartheid splintered under economic and political pressures. Although not restricted to Afrikaners, the interest groups that shaped and responded to these moments of collective anxiety were steeped in Afrikaner nationalism: the church, the government, and cultural organizations. Drawing their strength from the interlacing of moral, cultural and political identity under the auspices of Afrikaner nationalism, the folk devil of these satanic panics became *volk* devils.

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